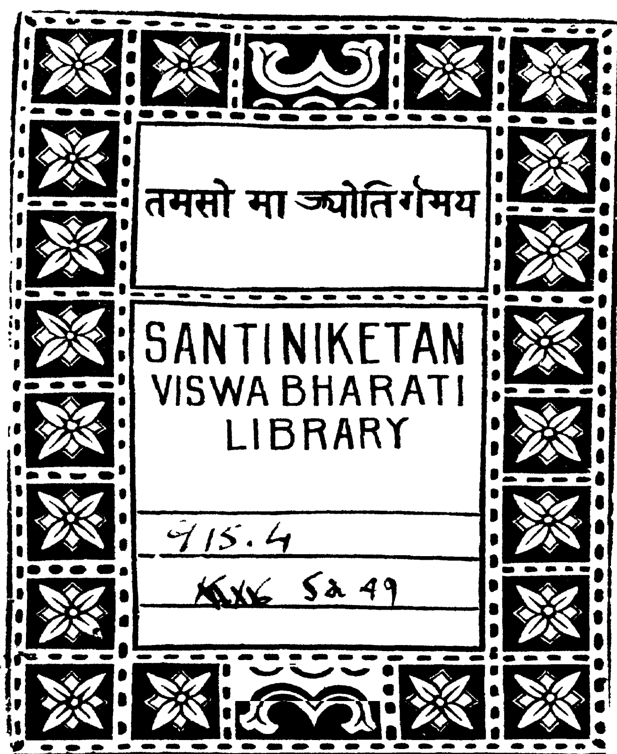


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BEAUTIFUL VALLEYS OF KASHMIR.

(Illustrated)

BY

SAMSAR CHAND KOUL.

World Watcher.

Author of:

'HOLIDAY TRIP IN KASHMIR'
AND
'BIRDS OF KASHMIR'

C. M. S. BISCOE HIGH SCHOOL.

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(N. India).

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FOREWORD.

It gives me pleasure to write a foreword to Mr. Samsar Chand Koul's book " Beautiful Valleys of Kashmir" because he has for years made it his business to interest the school boys in Natural History, away from their everlasting cramming for the University examinations and to use their eyes to see the beauties around them.

To lift up their eyes from the dirty streets and surroundings in the city to the glorious and everlasting hills on which they can feast their eyes as they walk to and from school.

If they will only awake with the sun, they will be cheered by the birds hymn of praise morning by morning and have the pleasure of distinguishing the various birds by their song. The fact that so many boys have been taught to love birds, especially pleases me. When I think back to the day when I arrived in this country and I called the attention of the boys to the birds, as I wished to know the names of birds I had never before seen. But no one had bothered about birds, or had the slightest interest in them.

Now, thank God, the boys apathy has changed to interest in a practical form by saving them from harm, misery or death. Such as the following:

1. A boy *notices* a bird fluttering among the branches of a tree. The birds, feet are caught in the string of a kite which had been left by a kite flyer. The boy climbs the tree and along the branch, and sets the bird free.

2. A boy *notices* that a bird in a shop for sale, is in a cage far too small for it. He feels sorry for the bird, buys the bird and sets it free.

3. A boy *notices* a bird on a metal water pipe does not fly away as he approaches and discovers that his feet are frozen to the pipe, it being a very cold winter morning, deep snow and hard frost. He fetches live charcoal, heats the metal pipe, the ice melts, and the brid is freed.

For these deeds and scores of others, I am most grateful to Samsar Chand for having taught his boys to love birds through his teaching of Natural History.

Cecil E. Tyndale-Biscoe.

10th July 1942.
Srinagar, Kashmir.

PREFACE.

Himáchal or Himálaya (home of snow) is the name given to the northern mountain range of India. These mountain ranges contain many fair valleys, the largest of which is Kashypa Mar (Kashyp's hovel), commonly known as Kashir or Kashmir.

Sumer or Meru is also a name given to the Himálaya. Hence Kashyp's Meru or Kashyp's Mountain is another rendering.

This valley is ringed round with mountains which in the higher altitudes again enclose other charming valleys, entrancing lakes and fascinating glaciers.

The beauty and glory of the Himáchal has been sung by poets from earliest times. The glittering peaks, such as Gauri Shankar (Mt: Everest) 29,141 ft. and Mt: Kailas (22,028 ft.) skirting Manusarwar Lake, are thought to be the abode of gods. The shady nooks, the rushing brooks and the flowery recesses are believed to be haunted by Reshies (Sages), who assume human shape occasionally in order to guide travellers.

The side valleys are full of vegetation. The flowers which are esteemed most and are believed to contain supernatural powers are Maha gunas (Arisaema), Jog Padshah (S. Sacra), Tilawáñeñ and Nila Kant. Tilawáñeñ, said to be guarded by a serpent, is believed to drip oil and to destroy all vegetation within a radius of 10 yds. Nila Kant shines during the night. Both these herbs are credited with the power of turning base metals into gold.

How we long to find these magic herbs and flood the world with gold, banish poverty and see people loving one another in peace, good will and tranquillity!

The account of the places given in this book was written as the author sat on boulders overlooking glaciers, on the shores of high altitude lakes, in places surrounded by natural flower beds, birds and babbling water. Thus the description is a faithful picture of many stored-up memories. He has also added native folklore about some flowers and lakes.

His aim in writing this book is to introduce glorious spots, verdant valleys graced with flowers and birds, sparkling lakes and glistening glaciers, to the general public, so that they might realise that Kashmir is a paradise on earth.

The honour of training the youth of the country to appreciate and admire nature belongs to the Rev: Canon C. E. Tyndale Biscoe, who used to lead parties of boys in spring and summer over hills and dales. This good work was continued by the Rev. R. Denton Thompson. These trips have been made an annual affair by Mr: E. D. Tyndale Biscoe and planned and arranged by Master N. L. Bakáya, the untiring mountaineer.

The author wishes to express his gratitude to the following persons for helping in the production of this book.

The Principal,C. M. S. Schools, Kashmir, for allowing the use of some pictures from school reports.

Mr: B. O. Coventry, the late Chief Conservator of forests, Jammu and Kashmir Government, for lessons in Botany.

Miss G. Palin for drawing two coloured charts of wild flowers of Kashmir.

Master Kántha Koul for the sketch map of the valley.

Dr. H. P. Shungloo and Mr. Triloki Nath Koul for looking after the printing of the coloured charts in Lahore.

Mr. F. Jacob, M. A. (Cantab) for correcting the manuscript and proof sheets.

Lastly, for the generous aid of Dr. A. C. Chowdhury of Rainawari Mission Hospital and Mr. E. D. Tyndale Biscoe, without which the publication of this book would have been an impossibility.

C. M. S. High School,
Srinagar, Kashmir.
May 1st 1942.

SAMSAR CHAND KOUL.

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A Trip to Gulmarg.

Gulmarg is supposed to be a corruption of Gauri Marg......Gauri's Meadow, the goddess Gauri being the presiding deity of a spring found in the place. But I think Gulmarg means a flower meadow and this name was coined by Yusuf Shah, the Tsak King of Kashmir, who used to visit Sonamarg, Gurais valley and Gulmarg with his mistress Habakhutan.

It lies in the North-East of the Pantsál Range under the shadow of mount Apharwaṭ (13,542 ft above sea level). Through poplar avenues and rice and maize fields we drove in a car which deposited us at the foot of the upland called Tangamarg, 24 miles from Srinagar. Whiskered terns were hovering over the rice fields hunting for food in the water and bee-eaters and shrikes were on the telegraph wires watching the unfortunate insects which were to be their victims.

From Tangamarg two ways lead us to the marg......one rather steep, a foot path, the other a metalled road with a gradual ascent. The road winds among the blue pines. Here and there we see geraniums and dwarf lindolofia. Not very far from the road we saw belladonna in flower. After a walk of 3 and a half miles we emerge at the top into an extensive uneven plain. The huts which are generally made of planks are seen buried among the pines. Europeans and Indians come and take refuge under the pines from the scorching sun of the plains.

There is a regular bázár where everything can be purchased. One finds here all the

activities of civilization, which rather mar the natural beauty of the place. We saw a large number of jungle crows busily feeding their young. Green-finches and gold-finches are seen in swarms in the summer months. The excursionist has ample opportunity to spend his time in the side valleys. For a day's trip he can go to Khellan marg which is 4 miles from Gulmarg and lies at the foot of Apharwaṭ. The path from Gulmarg passes through blue pines and silver firs with an undergrowth of Viburnum nervosum (Kulim) and Skimma laureola (patör), the leaves of which are sold in winter in the town as a substitute for flowers in religious ceremonies.

From Gulmarg to Khellan-marg there is an ascent of about 2,000 ft. in four miles. The path on either side is strewn with flowers. The leaves of the primulas give an idea of the charming beauty the flowers of these plants must possess in early spring. The geraniums and Salvia hians of stunted growth raise their beautiful heads above the green verdure. The modest forget-me-nots peep out from beneath huge fallen firs to take the wayfarer by surprise. Black crested tits and willow warblers chirp brightly among the trees, while the streaked laughing thrushes fly to and fro in the bushes with raised tails. Occasionally we heard the call of a cuckoo.

We came to the Marg. It is a flat piece of land above the tree region. It is covered with a plant (Euphorbia Thomsoniana yielding a milky juice). It is called hirb in Kashmiri and is used in medicine by the natives. The Marg stretches as far as the foot of Apharwaṭ. The slopes of this mountain are bare, covered here and there with juniper, rhododendron and alpine flowers. There is also a grove of birch trees. We found a strange kind of willow which creeps along the

ground and never grows to a height. Following the Poonch road, we made short cuts through mountain spurs till we rose to the plateau, and leaving the rocky surface on our right and turning a little to the left we rose higher again and saw the coloured gems of nature rearing their heads among the stones. We gathered some flowers for pressing. We ascended another ridge which led us to the precipitous bank of a lovely tarn with milky blue water, covered in two places with ice. This lake is called Alapather (12,600 ft). We ascended the highest peak of Apharwaṭ (13,542 ft.) to have a look at another small lake, the whole of which, except a small portion, was covered with snow. Here we found on sandy soil a plant called paraquilegia. One can see clearly the watershed between the Niñgal, the Bonyár and the Ferozpore Nalla. We saw a moving speck on a distant ice-bed and the coolie told us that it was a bear.

We descended to the Ala-pather lake where some of us had a swim. It reminded me of Mr. R. D. Thompson and his party swimming in Tár-Sar (12.800 ft.) There were some visitors from the plains on the lake. They were invited to join us. But they shivered and remarked, "Well, if we go in, who will carry home our dead bodies.?" We had a hailstorm which lasted for a few minutes. The beach of the lake was covered with Ṣaxifraga flagellaris and androsia. A rock chat was heard singing on the other side of the lake.

If you speak loudly it creates an echo and the valley resounds. How I wished Col. G. B. Sanford, the expert musician, could have played on his violin here rather than at Geneva, the whole place would have been turned into a musical hall!

On returning we passed over several snowbeds at the foot of which we found several flower beds of Cremonthodium deciansie, Tibetica mertanisa and Primula elliptica. We sat down to have a view of the plain and mountains beyond. The valley lay in calm repose wrapped in a green sheet of rice fields, embroidered with brown patches of wudars (alluvial plateaus) and fringed with poplar avenues in perfect order. In the hazy background rose the huge towers of nature emerging from the mist as the mountains of another world.

On the North stood the impregnable peak of Nanga Parbat (26,696 ft.) the Lord of mountains and the fourth highest peak in the world-like a crystal cone against the azure blue sky. On the east in a straight line with the Hari Parbat Fort rose the Kolahoi (Gásha Brari–goddess of light) 17792 ft. like a finger pointing towards infinity, while in between the two the Haramukh (Hara, the dispeller of afflictions, mukh-face) 16902 ft. lifted its flat peak, white on the north and brown on the south. How one would like to pass all one's days amid these scenes!-of course when it is not raining.

A legend says that Haramukh (male) was higher than Kolahoi (female) who told Haramukh that she would marry him provided he grew shorter of stature. Love is blind. He did so, but, alas, the hard hearted bride refused to marry him and now raises her haughty head over the suppressed peak of Haramukh.

We decended over the slope bedecked with beautiful flowers. We found here wild ash and rhododendron. We halted for some time at Khellenmarg near a fresh water spring. A number of kestrels were hovering over the slope and

several meadow buntings flew from side to side. The whole view disappeared in clouds which the setting sun turned from snow white to blazing gold.

TOSA-MAIDÁN

An alpine meadow-

What a joy it is when one gets relieved from official routine and spends a longed for vacation in an Alpine meadow. There he finds himself in direct touch with Nature, outside the pale of artificial civilization. The rushing torrents, with redstarts, dippers and wagtails, the lofty pines with tits and finches; the verdant mountain slopes covered with gentians, geraniums and geums; the rocks with sedums, saxifrages and blue poppies these are the books wherein he traces the skilful hand of the Great Power which sustains the universe.

It was on such an occasion that we arranged to have an expedition under the auspicies of the Natural History Department with a small party of boys and masters. We engaged 2 tongas and came to Mágám. The crops in many places were very bad on account of the drought. There were cracks in the fields and the paddy ears were withered. We heard the Tickell's thrush and tits in the poplar avenues. We turned to the left from Mágám and crossing over an alluvial plateau came to a village called Batapor where R. N. had a friend. We stayed there for two days. One day while we were having breakfast we heard that some one had fallen from a tree. We ran to the rescue and saw an old woman of sixty who had climbed up a tree to get leaves for her sheep. She missed her footing and fell to

the ground, leaving her headgear sticking to a branch of the tree. She was badly hurt. R. N. picked her up and carried her to her home.

We then made arrangements to go to Tosa Maidan. On Aug. 7th we started through a ravine which the villagers called Gogaldara, a mispronunciation of Kokodar Dwara. Kokadar is the name of a peak in the Pantsál Range and Dwara means a gate. It is through these gates that invaders used to enter Kashmir.

We passed through fields of maize and came to a path which turns to the right and makes a circuit of the Poshkar ridge, sacred to Hindus. A small stream flows by and plumbeous redstarts and forktails were disporting themselves among its shady nooks. Simla streaked laughing thrushes and grey tits flitted in and out of the bushes.

There is a ranger's hut at Anzor under huge fir trees and not very far from a spring of fresh water. This slope is covered with an undergrowth of Vibernum nervosum and Skimmia laureola, and here and there geraniums showed their beautiful heads. What a joy one experiences when walking under lofty pines, drinking in the exhilarating breeze, listening to the sweet music of birds and looking at the charming flowers.

We spent the night at Donwor-a glade like Zaiwan in the Sind valley. Here there were temporary Gujar sheds. These people come from the villages in the summer with their buffaloes and cows. They never allow any one to pitch a tent near their hut for fear of the evil eye. We did not like to go near them on account of the unpleasant smell.

Here in this forest the Gujars had arranged to give religious education to their children.

They had employed a Molvi (Mohammadan priest) who is given free rations and as -/4/- per boy. The number of boys was 20. The boys are taught to learn the Quran by heart without understanding its meaning.

We started from Donwor at 8·15 a m., and the sun of 8th Aug: was veiled with clouds. We hoped to find a shepherd at Brari Pather but he was not there, so we left for Yenga Pather. We had to find our own way through rank vegetation; the rain was pouring down and it was very courageous of a boy of ten, to walk over these slopes. A little higher the whole place was covered with various kinds of asters and several plants of Saussurea lappa (Kuṭh).

We arrived at Rachi Parhan at 11-45 a. m. and took shelter in a shepherd's hut. The sky cleared. The view was magnificent. The whole valley was at our feet spread like a carpet with mosaic work of green fields and uncultivated patches. The Wular was like a silver sheet at the end of the carpet. Most charming was the view of Nanga Parbat (26,696 ft.). The Nanga Parbat Range is the ninth from the Tragabal pass (10,000 ft.).

We started from Rachi Parhan at 1-30 a. m. The ascent was steep. The mountain was covered with birch trees, rhododendrons and junipers. At about 3-30 p.m. we reached Nakawör Pal (the nostril rock) 14,000 ft. It is said that during the Deluge or when Kashmir was a lake, the boats used to be moored round this rock. It is the highest peak in this part of the range. The view of the mountain ranges round the valley was glorious. We descended from here over the meadows and velvety slopes into Pehajan (13,000 ft). This valley is surrounded by hills clothed with green slopes. There are no trees but juniper bushes and out of these aquilegia, Codnopses

ovata and aconitum showed their beautiful heads.

There is a kind of medicine made out of the flowers of Chasmanthum aconitum. One part should consist of flowers and two parts of sugar. It is kept in a closed jar for forty days in the sun. It is believed to be a strong tonic and a cure for rheumatism and general debility. The dose should not be bigger than a small pea; a larger one is poisonous.

We found here several plants of artemisa, which also grows plentifully in the Gurais valley.

A tiny stream flows out of this valley from underneath the boulders. The stones are smooth and it was probably at one time the bed of a glacier. There were about 25 shepherd huts, of which 20 were inhabited. The villagers entrust their flocks to one of their number whose family has followed this calling from time immemorial. He takes them to these meadows for July, Aug. and September. His remuneration from the villagers is six seers of rice per sheep and at the end of autumn he goes to his customers and they give him a share of various products from their fields. The villagers pay one visit to their flocks when in the meadows and provide them with salt.

We saw shepherds sleeping outside their sheds under a single blanket, although the wind at these latitudes is very frosty and chilly. They always count their flocks in the morning when they take them out and in the evening when they get them back in the fold. In spite of that a shepherd told us that he had been robbed of twenty sheep.

We saw jungle crows, kestrels, wagtails, a pair of doves and a small black eagle. This place resembles Sekiwas but is less windy. We had spent a glorious time there with Mr. R. D. Thompson.

The path to Gulmarg branches off here. We left on the morning of Wednesday the 9th Aug. The aconitum on both sides of the pass was in full bloom, and reminded us that Potpheajan is a rich and verdant defile. The slopes were covered with swertia and primula which were in seed. Directly the snow melts this place must be like a celestial flower garden when swertia and primula are in full bloom. The roots of Swertia petiolata (mumrán) are used as a medicine for the eyes.

The Basmai Galli (13,000 ft.) is the pass which leads into Tosa Maidan. The view from here is not so grand. The extensive meadows come into sight. In descending the pass we found Jurinea macrocephala (Dhup). It has a deeply lobed ashy coloured leaf. The root of this plant is mixed with other scented drugs and is burnt as incense.

The shepherds are scattered all over the wide meadow which is many miles in extent. We saw a flock of red-billed choughs, several vultures, kestrels and a pair of turtle doves. There is a stream which flows out of Shup Nág.

A pass on the right leads into the valley of Prunts. This pass was then the easiest and safest into the Panjab. About 1021 A. D. Mahmud of Ghazni's two unsuccessful invasions of Kashmir were by this pass. In 1814 A. D Maharaja Ranjit Singh's first attempt to invade Kashmir was by the same route. The great Chinese traveller Hiueng Tsiang visited Poonch by the Tosa Maidan route about 633 A. D.

A shepherd showed us the remains of some buildings which were inhabited by either soldiers or watchmen. He also told us the names of various plateaus. One plateau was called shahar (city), the other chowki, and so on. There are several watch-towers (damdam) 4 storeys high at

every strategical point. In fact in bygone days this was an important pass. It is now grazing land. The same shepherd complained that there were thieves about and that they could not be checked. He said that they used formerly to be under a head shepherd and obeyed his commands, but now selfishness held sway and every shepherd was his own master.

Woe be to thee, selfishness! Thou art the chief sin in the world But for thee the world would have been an Eden.

There is a plant (Anemone obtsuiloba) which the peasants gather and sell to a contractor who exports it to India. If I remember rightly, the dry maund costs them Rs. 2/-. A kind of medicine is manufactured from this plant. Some parts of the plateau are covered with tall thistles on which camels feed when they go over the pass.

On August 10th at 9-30 a. m. some members of the party went back by the same route to Baṭapor; others went on to see Nila Nág. We found out from the shepherds that Nila Nág was about 15 miles from Tosa Maidan.

We descended through pines and firs, glades and thickets, amidst geraniums and dandelions (wanhand) over the pony track at the foot of the mount, whence maize fields and Gujar houses came in sight About 5-30 p. m. we came to the bridge which crosses over the Sukh Nág canal and goes to Arzal. We stayed here for some time to see the logs dashing against one another when floating from the forest area towards the city.

We asked some villagers how far Nila Nág was. They answered seven miles. Beyond the bridge the road branches off, one through the forest and the other through the villages.

We went along the forest road. If the condition of the peasantry is to be judged by buildings, the peasants on this side are more prosperous than those on the Khág side. We kept on walking but did not reach any particular place. Every time we asked a peasant how far Nila Nág was, we received the same answer, seven miles. Even after trudging along till sundown the seven miles grew no shorter. We stayed for the night in a shop.

These villages are near the head waters of Sukh Nág canal, hence the crops are luxurious and aquaducts are fringed with willows, balsams and Achhilum millifolium. (Pahal gása). The villagers buy the necessaries of life in exchange for the products of their fields. Snuff, tobacco and tea are consumed in large quantities. They inhale snuff and rub their teeth with it.

The next day was Friday and on that day the shopkeeper had to climb high up to the meadows to buy butter which he got at a very cheap rate. Shopkeepers make women take an oath not to sell butter to any one. I remember when we were in Kolahoi in 1925 with that wonderful mountaineer Mr. R. D. Thompson, who climbed a height of 17,000 ft. on a crutch and one leg, we offered money to the Gujars for butter, but they would not sell it. The head of the family was not present when the family took this oath of allegiance to the shopkeeper and so he was able to sell us some.

We left the place early in the morning and crossed over an alluvial plateau to a village where we found a Paṭwári (village clerk) who received us kindly and told us that Nila Nág was nine miles away. So seven miles in one day became nine miles with compound interest.

We had our meal and in the afternoon the Paṭwari gave us a guide to lead us to Nila

Nág. There the Rev. Canon and Mrs. Tyndale-Biscoe received us with parental love.

Nila Nág (Blue spring) is a secluded and quiet place in Gogji Pather village. It is not a spring but a lake about 40 ft. deep. It has no outlet. An old villager told me that his grandfather remembered the time when the earth shook and a thunderbolt fell and thus gave birth to the lake. There are still stumps of old pines left in it. He also told me that several times he had seen demons and spirits in the form of crocodiles and snakes in the lake, and the people who lived near kept at a safe distance. Since the time that Dr. Neve and the Rev. Canon C. E. Tyndale-Biscoe made their summer huts on its bank and made it an annual resort, all these demons have disappeared and we now ventured to go near it.

In the by-gone days this place was visited by bears and a panther. The panther ate almost every dog in the village close by and was now trying to get the Canon's dog. The Canon had several encounters with it. One day he loaded his gun and put a goat as bait in a large wicker basket and then waited for the panther. While the Canon was lying in wait for the panther, the latter was stalking him from the rear.

On another occasion the Canon invited a friend of his-an expert hunter-to bag the panther. But this time also the panther fooled him. He found out by the pug marks on the snow that the beast was chasing him.

It was night. The Canon was coming with his two little children from the village to his hut. On the way he saw two glittering eyes and presently came face to face with the panther. The Canon stared at the eyes of the panther. The panther twice bowed its head before the

Canon and then sprang away into the forest. Even lower animals pay respect to a great soul. For twenty years the beast roamed at large and was finally found dead in one of the ravines.

Several people who were learning swimming in the lake have been saved from drowning. Among them was Miss E. Newman who spent her life for the good of Kashmir women and built a beautiful hospital for women at Rainawari-a haven of rest-but it was only used as a dispensary until established by Dr. J. E. Vaughan. It is now run by Dr. B. M. Smyth.

We spent the night at Nila Nág and left in the morning thanking the Canon and Mrs. Tyndale-Biscoe for their kindness. We came to Nágám where there is a dispensary. In the afternoon we engaged a tonga and came to Srinagar to resume our work with renewed vigour.

Some valleys and peaks of the Pantsal Range.

Blessed is the country surrounded by mountains which bestows on her inhabitants no small amount of pleasure and happiness. The side valleys concealed among them vie with the garden of Eden in beauty.

In the summer of 1937, the members of the C. C. Club visited some valleys and peaks of the Pantsál Range.

The party left on August 3rd, from Srinagar in a lorry. It drove through a poplar avenue outside Ram Bagh which is the cremation ground of the Maharajas of Kashmir. A few of the gypsies have adopted settled life near the road. Wahathor is a village which produce buffoons.

The road was unmetaled and some of the bridges were not suitable for wheeled traffic. We were obliged to stop about two miles on this side of Nágám (New village) in a willow orchard. When the whole party had arrived in Mr. Bavington's lorry, we examined the pony backs and loaded them. A road is now under construction.

At noon we started. Several flocks of pigeons and jackdaws were eating grain in the mown wheat fields. Chickory (wan hand) showed its blue head from the rice fields. A stream called the Apōzaren (female liar-not permanent) flowed by several villages. There were several pear and apple orchards near the road. In a hole in the middle of a precipice was the chick of a vulture. The nest was covered with white waste. We arrived at about six p. m., at Nila Nág, described elsewhere. We were most kindly received by our friends. Some of us bathed in the lake which beautifies the forest. We found three nests of the whistling thrush on a raftor in the Rev. Canon C. E.

Tyndale Biscoe's hut, exactly over Mr. Jacob's bed. We saw also several kites moulting their feathers in their wings and tails.

Lovely was the walk through pines with Viburnum nervosum (Kulim) undergrowth. The smell in the air was refreshing. The orange berries (a kind of Umbelliferae bush—vish) grew side by side. It was a nice bridle-path which opened out at Yus Marg. Before entering the Marg every wayfarer had to leave a piece of stick on a heap in the middle of the path, a gift to Lori Baba (the guardian Saint of Yus). Some believe that the heap catches alight by itself or it may be that Lori Baba instigates some one to set the heap on fire. Several flowers of Potentilla nepallensis were found. A path among firs led up Durga-Dolan (the trapeze of Durga, the goddess dispelling miseries). The Upper Durga-Dolan is a lovely spot which is surrounded by fir trees and drained by a stream. Dandelion (Maidan hand) and eyebright were very common. The former plant boiled and well cooked in oil with spices is applied in the case of fractures and dislocations, while in France the leaves are prepared for salad. Several plants of pink pedicularis (kala wiot) and Salvia hians were found on the bank of the stream. Several plants of Chaerophyllum villosum (Bota jeta) the root of which is sewn to the caps of children to avert the influence of an evil spirit were here. Redstarts and jungle-crows were common. A red-flanked bush-robin was observed near its deserted nest which was in the middle of a Viburnum bush near the root.

One of the poneymen was a wrestler. He challenged all the Gujars to combat with him. No one ventured to face him in the arena " Because ", they said, " he employs the tricks

of wrestling ".

Owing to the indisposition of Mr. Eric, we could not leave on August 5, but surveyed some of the margs. We ascended the front spur and came out at Háma Khal. It is a colony of shepherds. There are some temporary huts which have been divided into compartments, each compartment consisting of one family. A big horizontal log of three feet in diameter supported the roof at the back of the hut. The inside was clean. Water had to be brought from a distance. We saw several margs and returned to the camp by the far side of the valley.

Next day to our great sorrow, we saw Mr. and Mrs. Eric Tyndale Biscoe and their children going back to Nila Nág and we proceeded to Barga (the rays of the sun) keeping to the left bank of the stream. We passed Ponzkur (monkey daughter) and arrived at Barga. Upper Barga consists of mostly denuded stones. There are twelve shepherd huts, four of them are conical.

An easy ascent led us to Danzab (Rice grass, probably swampy nature of the soil). It is an extensive valley. The dandelion and Euphrasia officinalis were in profusion from Nila Nág to the foot of Sunset Peak (Romesh Thong). Aconitum chasmanthum—monkshood was also common. The flower of this plant is made into jam and is given in very small doses as a tonic. Large doses are poisonous. The root, which is two small bulbs joined together, when dried and mixed with Sesamum (tel) oil is rubbed on rheumatic limbs. In pouring rain we pit h d our tents in the North-eastern corner of the valley away from the stream. We ought to have camped near the stream or towards the farther side of the valley. Most of the valley was swampy. The configuration was such that the cold wind was

not felt.

Early next morning at 5-30 a. m., we started to climb Sunset Peak. We gazed at the lovely sunrise. We engaged a guide who led us over boulders and by long, tedious paths, and avoided the general path. Some of us traced our own way through the valley and crossed the stream, gradually ascending to a big rock with a hole in it. This is called Nakawör Pal (Nostril Rock) and must be on a level with the Nakawör Pal at the extreme North of Tosa Maidan. It is believed that when Kashmir was a lake or it may be during the Deluge that boats were moored at these rocks. We ought to have camped here. Some islets in the middle of the stream were covered with sweet scented yellow Corydalis and the bank with red Polygonum (moñtsaran). The path on the right goes over to Katsa Gol Pass (14,000 ft.). We took the left course, leaving the boulders and walking over grassy patches. We found several beds of Asters, Mertensia tibetica, the scented Chorispora sabulosa, saxefraga sibirica and Sedum. At 10 a. m., we came to a snow bed where we had our breakfast. A little higher, right at the foot of the mountain, is a tarn called Makor Sar (defiled lake). Round here, Sassurea sacra (Jog Pádshah) was growing.

The snow over the glacier had begun to thaw. Slowly and steadily, we climbed the steep side of the glacier which had very few crevasses-being the northern aspect of the mountain. There were lines and one or two crevasses not more than a foot wide and shallow When we neared the saddle we saw the advance party crawling along the ridge of Makōr Nág Peak—a minor peak which they mistook for Romesh Thong (Sunset Peak). Mr. Jacob shouted to them and said that the Canon had told him that the peak on the

right was the highest one, so they descended. We all met at the col.

While resting, I saw something shining like Jupiter in the middle of some dark blue stones. On closer examination, to my great joy, I found Sassurea sacra (Jog Padshah) the king of saints. It was like a cotton ball, in the centre were violet fibres and round about was a rosette of leaves. The plant was about 6 inches high between two slabs with very little earth. The root was not very deep.

We climbed the ridge along the edge of the ice over shale and scree. Higher up it was an easy walk to the top of the peak. It was 2-30 p. m. The Punch side was a sheer precipice. This was Sunset Peak (Romesh Thong).

This peak was first climbed by Dr. Neve. It catches the last rays of the setting sun, hence its name. Dr. Duke, in his " Guide to Kashmir", regrets its English name. As the peak lies exactly at the source of the Romesh, it is called Romesh Thong. Fog hid the charming view from us,

We began the descent. The glacier by this time was full of life. There were arteries in the form of rills flowing over the blue ice. It was difficult and treacherous to walk over such ice. We managed to zigzag across it till we reached terra firma. We noticed scratches and smooth surface of the stones, which proved that the glacier once filled the valley lower down but now had receded.

There are a number of tarns. The water of these tarns and the glacier form the source of the Romesh which joins the Jehlum (Vetasta) near Sangam. There is a pass which goes to Rajauri. Walking over grassy moraines instead of following the lead of the guide, we had an easy

walk round the knolls and by 7-30 p. m. had neared the camp which was far away from the main mound. We had walked for 13½ hours. In the evening we learnt that two ponies had died. The poneymen were of opinion that these ponies had eaten Aconitum chasmanthum (Mohand) and this had poisoned them. This plant was all over the valley.

The morning of August 7th was foggy. One vulture visited the carcasses in the morning. In half an hour about 90 vultures gathered. It was an interesting sight to see them alighting, lowering their necks, walking in a majestic way, or hopping as if a heavy load had been laid on their shoulders. The griffon would drive away any smaller ones, and when it was away with its wing stretched out as if at attention, others would come to the feast.

It was a problem for Dig (the name of the pi-dog which followed us from Duragdolan). The dead ponies were in two different parts of the valley. It would not allow the vultures to eat the carcasses. When it dashed in one direction the vultures feasted on the other side and vice versa.

Next day after breakfast we moved the camp. The poneymen took a lower path along Ludra Mar to avoid the boulders. We travelled via Tatagen over the spurs through a valley full of boulders which resulted from the denudation of the late winter snow. As far as possible we avoided stones and juniper bushes. It is a pity that the birch tree is dying out in this part. There are only a few stumps left. The bark which is used for roofing had been stripped off and the trees had died in consequence.

On the way we looked down on light green glades in the middle of dark green firs,

whether these margs are clearings of forests or remnants of glaciers with fertile soil on them producing rich verdure, it is difficult to tell.

We waited for the poneymen under a lovely shady pine. In front of us was the grassy knoll of Chanz eroded by the Dud Gangá Canal (Chets Koñ Nala). The high and low pitch of music produced by the following of the torrent and the warbling of the tree-creeper and the willow-warbler surrounded us. Here and there we saw shepherds with their flocks. Hereabouts we were told of the presence of the red bear. The poneymen arrived. We crossed the torrent over a two plank bridge.

It was a delightful valley. On the East walled by Rata Bál (blood hill), on the West by Shenkar Bulbul mountain, while on the south were the high peaks with glacier valleys in them. The Rata Bál is the watershed between the Romesh Nala and the Chets Kol Nala and Shenkar Bulbul is the water parting between the Chets Kol and the Shala Gang which flows from Ashtár. The mountain or a plateau which divides one river basin from the other is called a watershed.

Lovely was the valley drained by the Dud Ganga stream. There was a strata of quartz in Shenkar Bulbul Mountain, the stones of which, being dislodged, got scattered in the valley. One is in the shape of a triangular prism, hence the place is called Chets Kóñ or sangi-safed (white stone valley).

We pitched our tents on the left bank of the stream which carves here fantastic circuits not unlike the course of the Jhelum near Srinagar. It is called Náwak. The Northern aspects of mountain spurs are covered with Juniper bushes (Yethor). The sheep do not let flowers grow in the valley. It is practically a grazing maidan. In the afternoon

we surveyed the place and traced the course of the peak to be attacked. In the first place we were not sure which the actual Taṭakoti peak was. Secondly the guide (this time a shepherd) had never been beyond the glaciers. We had a moderate climb. On the path there is a rock called Kundal Pal. We saw several glacier valleys under a number of peaks. Probably the eastern valley is the nearest route from Romesh peak (Sunset peak) via Kátsa Gol Pass (14,0C0 ft).

There was also a tarn from which the Chetsa Kol flows. On the western side Chotta Galli (small lane) pass 13,700 ft. leads towards Poonch. The confluence of the lake and glacier waters takes place at Domel (two junctions).

On the 9th at 5.15 A. M. the party started to attack the peak. We climbed over an ascent which led us to a plateau littered with slate and shale, till we reached the base of the glacier which covered the whole of the mountain slope leaving the top naked. We walked over the ice cautiously. Some of the stones were very black, others had grey spots. There were also several islets in a lake of ice. The black colour of the stones caused the place to be named Surmataki (Antemonium piece).

Turning towards the left we could see the conical peaks of Tatakoti (15,6C0 ft.) which we thought impossible to climb. For the first time we knew for certain this was the peak.

Slowly and steadily walking over the ice, we at last came to the pass. We judged from here that the peak could be gained. There was another peak like a slab standing erect with a gap separating it from the main peak. Below the col to our right was a tarn which gave rise to the Shala Ganga.

All along the col to our great joy we found a large number of Sassurea sacra (Jog pádshah). Some of them were fairly big and charming to look at. In fact all along the range from the sunset peak to Tatakoti this flower is sure to be found high above the snow line. It is much coveted by mendicant sadhus who know its various uses for different kinds of diseases. The pappus boiled in milk is believed to give relief from fever and other ailments. Those who know these uses are loth to tell the secret to others. Money making by this means they abhor.

We refreshed ourselves at the col. The climb from here was very steep. The shaly bits were loose. Of course there were rocks which afforded a hand hold. Precipitous were the slopes on our right and left. We took off our footwear and climbed bare-footed. Sedum crassipes and sacras were here and there. Steadily on all fours we gained the summit. It was 10. 30. a. m. We found a cairn, probably erected by the survey party of India. Opposite to this we built another to commemorate the ascent of C. C. Club.

What a delight to rest against a rock in the rarefied air beyond man's civilization, surrounded by the five elements, gazing at the Almighty's wondrous hand-work. Man and Nature blend into eternal bliss. Such occasions are rare to find.

On the south the plains were filled with a sea of fleecy clouds as far as the horizon, to the west was a row of peaks no less than forteen from the Sunset Peak, (Romesh Thong) rising like beacons in a sea, while glaciers between the peaks shone like the crest of sea waves. In the trough were the tarn like jewels in rings, giving rise to the perennial rivers to irrigate the thirsty plains. Such is Himalayan beauty.

"All that is beautiful comes from the highest beauty which is God".

Lest the clouds should envelope us we began to retrace our steps. We reached the col where we put on our shoes. With sure steps turning round a ledge we came to the glacier. By this time the sleet had begun and small rills were flowing over the ice. A pair of red billed chough (Wan Kaviñ) were sitting high up among the crags in their cosy nest, cawing all the time we walked over the glacier. It was unusual for them to see in their domain strangers soiling the silvery shining surface of the glacier. We were friends not foes. We also whistled and cawed, but alas! we could not understand each other. How often bickerings arise as the result of misunderstandings.

The glacier was on the northern slope, hence the crevasses were small. Without any mishap we reached the shale and firm rocks, some of which were fringed with pink polygonums. Over the rocks and rivulets, over the moraines and meadows we reached the camp at 2. 30. p. m.

In the afternoon the clouds began to gather and covered the valley. The bleating of the sheep, the loud calls of shepherds hastening to shelter under rocky caves, and the pealing of thunder were the sounds that broke the silence of the valley. The rain poured down.

The sky was cloudy next morning and it began to drizzle. We had planned to go to Tosa maidan, which is two stages across Chánz-a knoll of mount Shenkar Bulbul. The middle stage is Doorn. Bad weahter and our anxiety about Mr. Bric's health made us abandon our programme. In the afternoon we removed our camp to Ludra Mar. Through meadows and glades separated by fringes of pines we passed,

picking fresh mushrooms (hedar) on our way. In about 2 hours' time we covered about 6 miles, the rain pouring hard. Ludra Mar is an undulating meadow. No stream drains it. The shepherds have dug aqueducts for some miles, which water the place. There are about 20 huts some of which were well swept inside. This is the base camp for shepherds looking after the flocks at Sangi-safed. Every morning the sturdy wives of these shepherds bring food to their husbands from a distance of 6 miles. They believe that if women stay in the Sangi-safed valley, they will either be carried off by the fairies or the fairies will haunt them. They talk of the time when neither fowl nor mutton nor garlic was cooked there. They quoted instances when their uncles had been carried away and let after some days in a certain place semi-lunatics. Some such lunatics had been restored to normal health by the priests. But I think if Mrs. Eric had been with us, she would have proved too strong for all the fairies.

On the morning of 11th August we struck our tents. Descending lower down from meadow lands we entered the tree belt. It was one of the most lovely walks of our trek. The forest was fairly dense. The undergrowth was not sparse. The Prasnág stream flowed lower down into the Dud Gangá. Charming were the orange alder berries. We found here another species bearing scarlet red berries. A friend of mine made several bottles of jam from these berries.

At Charge we met a fairy in the form of a Gujrani (herds-woman) who set us on the right track. She called one of us 'King' and asked for bakshish. We revisited Yus and in 5 hours' time we arrived at Nila Nág, where we heard that Mr. Eric had developed typhoid and

was a patient in the Nursing Home in Srinagar. He was there 3 months. Thank Heaven, he reacovered and went to New Zealand to recoup.

KONSAR NÁG LAKE.
(VISHNA PAD).

The second expedition under the auspices of the Cashmir Climbing Club had for its objective a high altitude lake in the Pantsál Range. The party left at mid-day on the 13th of July. At Pámpor we turned towards the east over an unmetalled road. Here the fields on either side of the road were parched for want of rain. The linseed and the cotton fields were in flower. Beyond Pulawáma which is the chief town of the district, water is plentiful, so the rice fields were luxuriant and the villages surrounded by trees. In three hours we arrived at Shupyian. It is a fairly large town and an important centre of trade. It lies at the foot of the pass which leads into the plains. It was here that the last Pathán Governor Jabár Khan was killed by the Sikhs, who were invited by Bir Joo Dhar to put an end to the tyranny of the Patháns.

About a mile from the town there is a spring near the foot of a plateau. It is sacred to the Hindus. There is a fixed day early in August when they remember all children who have died during the year throughout the province. This spring is called Kapála Motsan.

We met here some old boys, a Judge, a police officer and some of other professions. The first mentioned was of great help to us in procuring ponies for our luggage.

The birds noticed were sparrows, jungle

crows, skylarks, goldfinches, sand pipers, bush-chats, and cuckoos.

Next morning the sky was partially clouded. We moved our camp to Kungawaṭan. The path led through pines and in many places it was very bad. To attract tourists to this part of the country, the path should be kept in repair. It pays the State when pleasure spots are comfortably accessible. We found Alpine flowers as usual on both sides of the path. At Goirwatan we crossed the bridge. It was very interesting to stand on the bridge and look at the gorge carved by the torrent. A mile further down, the torrent forms the beautiful Aharabal (Harbal-Place of Vishnu) falls. Fold upon fold one could see the two perpendicular walls on either side of the torrent which the river had eroded. The conspicuous flower Hermerocallis fulva (Riod) with its orange colour was everywhere seen among the rocks and tall grass.

Kungawatan is a glade about 11 miles from Shupyian. It lies a short distance from the stream. Among the pines near the river bank there is a small sulphur spring. There is also a forest hut and a small enclosure where the forest department tries to cultivate Sassurea lappa (kuth), digitalis, Belladona (motbrand) and Hyacamous niger (bázár banga).

The dawn of 18th July was greeted by probably the grey-headed thrush. When the sun rose, the woodpecker, the flycatcher, the tree-creeper, the crested black tit and the scarlet minivet were seen among the pines. A plant of umbelleferae with white flowers (like hemlock) was common. The path runs over meadows. We could see the temporary sheds of the goatherds spread all over the valley. They* looked at us with inquisitive eyes peeping out of their dens. These

goatherds, descendants of Abraham and Isaac, or of Gujar Rajputs come from the plains with their flocks, cattle and buffaloes and spent July and August in these meadows. We passed a shed the inmates of which came out to look at the intruders. We counted 9 boys, 2 women, and 2 girls. These people prefer black for their clothes. The women wear a small cap projecting over the neck. The caps of the children are beautifully set with cowries shells. The women are agile in climbing the mountains. They carry water or milk cauldrons on their heads and at the same time carry a child in a sling-like piece of cloth. Some of them are graceful. They plait their hair which comes down over their ears and ends in a pig-tail. The men seem to spend their time loitering.

From a distance we heard the beating of drums. On getting nearer we saw round a shed several men cooking rice in large copper cauldrons. A small crowd of goatherds were sitting in a circle watching two other men brandishing their swords according to their own rhythm, while the two other men standing were beating drums, probably to keep in harmony with the gestures of the swordsmen. We also stood round to watch. Sometimes a dancer would walk on his toes, waving a scarf round his neck the end of which flowed under his arm and over his shoulder. A wrestler appeared. He raised a heavy log of wood weighing about 2 mds.' over his head and performed some astonishing physical feats. The drum beating continued. It was a festival in honour of the circumcision of a small boy, to which they had invited their relatives and friends from the valley.

We left this festive gathering after our strongest had tried their luck with the log and failed. We

were surprised to find these mountain slopes devoid of juniper bushes These bushes must have been rooted out by the goatherds, fuel being rather scarce. So they had ruthlessly destroyed the juniper bushes and birch trees. It would be worth while in the interest of the State to preserve these trees.

In several places we found water gushing out as if from a hole. There are seven of these streams and hence they are called Sata Pokhri (seven springlets) a reference to the constellation of the Great Bear. There is a depression in one place where water collects. It is called Maih Nág. The valley is therefore called Maih Nág valley. Round the boulders several beds of Jacob's ladder and thyme peeped at us. The path by the right bank is nearer but over boulders, by the left it is longer and smoother. The last 200 ft. of ascent gave us a hard struggle. What a reward we enjoyed from the top of the plateau! The distant Brahma Shakri peaks with serrated edges, draped in a silvery white snowfield and at their feet lies the gleaming turquoise blue lake tapering to the south-east, closely surrounded on the east and west by mountains with almost precipitous slopes. The small floating icebergs enhanced the beauty of the lake. Every atom here manifests the glory of the Great Power upholding the universe. One would think that man's selfish nature would melt away into selflessness and thus change our planet into a paradise.

We found a small plot where we could pitch our tents. There were neither trees nor bushes, so we had to send poneymen lower down to fetch fuel.

The lake is fig shaped. It stretches from north-east to south-west. The greatest breadth is about ¾ of a mile and the length is about 2



Ski Club Hut at Khillan Marg

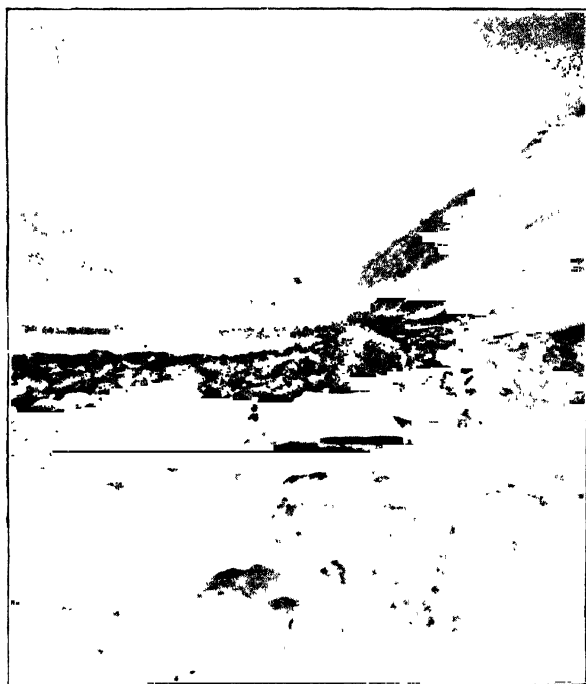


Photo by Mr. R. D. Thomps

A Lake in the Wardwon Valley



MR JACOB AND HIS PARTY BATHING AT NAWAK (12,600 ft)

The source of the Dud Ganga—the river of milk



KONSAR NAG (Vishná Pad) 13,000 ft.

Mrs. Eric T. B. giving a joy-ride to a Gujrani. Note the icebergs on the lake

miles, the depth is more than 150ft. A certain American professor once came here to ascertain the depth to which ultra-violet rays can penetrate, 10,000 ft. above sea level. He adjusted his machine with proper screws and placed it in the centre of the lake. The screws and somehow became loose and part of the machine sank, so the experiment was not successful.

The north-eastern shore has some inlets, one of which is considerably broader than the others. The lake becomes narrower and narrower till it ends in a point towards the southwest. Hence the man who first visited it called it Vishna Pád (Vishnu's foot). It is also called Koñsar Nág.

We launched a rubber canoe on it which Mr. E. D. Tyndale-Biscoe had brought from Srinagar. It took 2 people at a time and was propelled with double paddles. To overturn or spring a bad leak meant certain death. No external help could come and the strongest swimmer would have been paralysed in this icy water above 12,000 ft. The canoe enabled us to survey every nook and corner of the lake. How our old friend, the Rev. R. D. Thompson would have enjoyed it!

When the bakarbáns (goatherds) come here, they sacrifice a goat, and the skin and the head of it they throw into the lake. If the skin moves round the lake and sinks in the middle, they believe that the offering is accepted by the god of the lake.

They do not bathe in the lake. Mr. Jacob offered a prize to any goatherd who would swim to an iceberg a few yards distant. After much hesitation one daring spirit was successful. Some were given joyrides in the canoe. The offer of a rupee tempted an old woman to risk her

life. By these means we did much to dispel the haunting dread of the lake from their minds.

On the northern side there is a subterranean passage through which water is seen and heard gurgling down towards Kashmir. Similarly it is believed that water flows underground towards the plains, no glacier feeds the lake, but there are snowfields and snowbeds which discharge water into the lake. The amount of water which flows out of the lake appears greater than it receives. There must undoubtedly be springs in it.

In the afternoon of July 16th some of us climbed a mountain to have a view of the lake. The valley towards the northwest was covered with small snowbeds or denuded slopes, and yellow coloured beds of Draba alpina were dotted in the green patches of grass.

On the afternoon of July 17th two parties started to climb to different passes, one led by Mr. & Mrs. Tyndale-Biscoe, the other by Mr. Jacob and the Headmaster. The first party traversed a snowfield and witnessed from the snow-covered pass a plain densely wrapped in a fog. The other party found a poney track with moderately difficult ups and downs over the shale. The last couple of hundred yards covered with snow and very steep was rather difficult.

A slip meant a fall of several dozen yards to the snowfield below. It is the general pass by which the Gujars bring their buffaloes from the plains for the summer grazing It must be a strenuous task to bring such a big heavy animal over such a height and slope. They employ coolies, eight men to each buffalo, and one by one they steer the animal over the pass.

We could see from the top fog rising towards us. We felt with one side of our faces the warm wind of the plains and with the other

the cold wind of the Kashmir valley. The contact of the two aerial currents covers the plain with fog. It is said that Lahore can be seen from here on a clear day. One of us remarked that the smoke from the railway engines hid the plain from our sight. In the afternoon it is always foggy. We found several clusters of Paraquilegia caespitosa among crevices in the cliffs, Saxifraga flagellaris and Mertensia tibetica.

Men from the plains arrive here in two days and with buffaloes in 10 days. The pass is called Yechini. It took us 3 hrs. from the camp to the top. On the way down we enjoyed some glissading. Lovely was the view of the lake with its various shades of colour. The reflection of the distant snowy peaks in the centre of the lake at sundown convinces the goatherds that a golden temple is buried there.

The morning of 18th July found every trekker equipping himself for the day's march. We left the camp at 5 a. m. We took the north-western track round the lake. Leaving a heap of boulders we came to a goat track. In some places the land slides had made even the goat-track almost impassable. The path ran high up on the steep side of the mountain. At the foot lay the deep cold lake. So a slip meant death as no aid was possible. Swimming in the icy cold water was out of the question. The vanguard cut steps with ice axes Some parts were fairly covered with alpine flowers, Jurinea macrocephala (dhup) being very common. The Macrotomia Benthami (kahzabán) was also found. All reached the other side in safety and waited there for Mr. Jacob and the Headmaster who had avoided the dangerous path by crossing the lake in the canoe. The valley ascended from here There were several temporary sheds of

Gujars here. Some of them were Hindus who were very hospitable and refused money for the food and drink they supplied. They had come from Riasi and Rámban for the summer months with their flocks and herds. A stream from the snowfields empties itself into the lake. On an island of debris in a sea of snow we sat down to have breakfast. We saw in the centre of the valley a big cylindrical fossil, probably the trunk of a tree with annual rings on one side.

The party was divided into groups under a leader who was given an ice-axe and a rope. To attach the mountain from the valley side was almost impossible. We decided to go first to the pass and then along the ridge and thus reach the summit. The snow was everywhere. We could see a labyrinth of mountains from the Koñsar Nág pass (14,000 ft.) and a small tarn on the other side. We scrambled over the serrated ridge and sat down on a peak till one of us surveyed the place. Several rock pigeons flew out of a cliff. Round the peak we found potentillas, sedums and Mertensia tibetica. To cross from one peak to another was difficult. Steps were cut with ice-axes and a rope was tied from one end to the other till the party had crossed like the monkeys of the South American forests. Some of the party descended over a steep ravine and loose stones, glissading where the snow came down into the valley. They saw Mr. Jacob and the Headmaster ascending the pass. The other party with Mr. and Mrs. Eric Tyndale Biscoe continued till they came to a snowfield and from there got to the highest peak (Brahma Shakari). They rounded the lake and arrived late at the camp, deserving full credit for what they had accomplished; others, returning by the same route, were caught by a hail and thunder-storm

and one of the party had a narrow escape from being swept down into the lake by a boulder from a land slide. For a time they were lost in a waste of boulders. All returned safely without any mishap. The canoe proved invaluable, for one of the party fell ill and had to be taken back to the camp. To carry him on a stretcher would have been almost impossible.

The goatherds live in these high valleys during the summer months. They are without any medical aid. The Government dispensaries are several days' march from them. To every tourist they appeal for medicine. Mr. Jacob had a kind of ointment which we called his magic balm and it cured many kinds of skin eruptions and cuts, but alas it could not be given for internal disorders. It would be a great boon to these people if the government could arrange to send travelling dispensaries to these districts. It would not only cure the diseases of these persons but the doctor himself would gain health and renewed vigour for working in the city during the winter months.

In the afternoon of July 18th, half the camp moved down to Kungawatan. We stayed late during the night round a big camp fire, till the moon peeped through the pine leaves and sparks of the fire disappeared in the ether to meet the stars. The merry talk went on until at last we urged Mr. Jacob to turn in as it was now 3. a. m.

The remainder of the party, after visiting the Yechini Pass, arrived at noon with the invalid. They found it difficult to induce the goatherds to carry the stretcher even for payment. We had lunch together and walked down to Goir-watan where we spent the night. During the night it poured in torrents. The water from the mountain soaked our bedding. Sweet was the music of the

whistling thrush at dawn amidst the pealing of the thunder and the flashing of the lightning. After a hasty breakfast in the pouring rain we struck our tents and after toiling all day through the deep mud, arrived at Shupyian at 5. P. M. The priest there was kind to us. He gave us rooms and wood and we warmed our shivering bodies. Two lorries arrived in the morning and deposited us in the city of Pravarasen carrying with us many pleasant memories of our trek.

A trek to the Lidder and the Sind Valleys.

This trek was organised by Mr. R. D. Thompson. The aim of the trip was to acquire geological, ornithological and botanical information of the places we visited.

We left Srinagar on July 22nd. Here and there the sky was covered with clouds. The sweet twitter of the bulbul and the melodious song of the Tickell's thrush was heard among the poplar avenues. At Latipor we saw a griffon vulture hovering over a carcass. At Anantnag (Islamabad) the driver seemed unwilling to go on. After some altercation with him we engaged a tonga and removed a part of the load from the lorry.

We had our lunch near a sweet water spring on this side of Aker. The driver seemed to be expostulating when the car stopped two miles further on. It did not start again.

The road goes along the Shah Kul and the view of the valley on our left is magnificent. The road crosses the canal at Ganishpor sluice. Further on, there is a rock in the Lidder covered with red lead and dedicated to Ganish the elephant god. The rest of the party had engaged

another lorry which was going down to Srinagar and they passed us here in great style.

It was very late 9. 45. p. m. when I arrived in Pahalgám. Among bushes and in darkness, I could not find my way to the camp. Somehow, I managed to employ some seven coolies for the luggage but there was no light to guide them. An old student came out with a lantern and guided us to the camp.

Pahalgám (the village of shepherds) lies 'in a defile. The silvery foaming Lidder hastens down to meet the Vitasta, leaving the flat part on the left and eroding the mountain on the right. At Mámál, on the opposite side of Pahalgám there is an old temple and a spring.

We saw a whistling thrush coming down and kissing her young one which had been caged by a bird-fancier. Besides the whistling thrush we saw black bulbuls, mynas, jackdaws, black crested tits, meadow buntings, wagtails, jungle crows, European rollers and of course sparrows.

July 24th. The road to Arau runs along the moutain slope. It is densely forested and is full of bird life. Down below we hear the music of the rushing torrent. On the way we observed the following birds, meadow bunting, forktail (;black head, long heavy tail) and heard the sweet note of the whistling thrush, the grosbeak-(black head and wings, yellow body, conical ash coloured beak,) bush-chat and cinnamon-headed sparrow.

We decided to proceed to Lidderwaṭ. Arau consists of several grassy plateaus quite open. There we found a little colony of peasants. They must be snow-bound during the winter. From here deciduous trees become less and less and birch and fir trees come in sight.

Lidderwat is 8952 ft. above the sea-level. Here we noticed several ashy-headed wagtails, plumbeous redstarts and white-capped redstarts. We listened to the babbling of a stream which soothes all weariness.

We pitched 3 tents under the sky-kissing agglomerate slate crags. The sides of the mountains were heavily forested with fir trees.

This place is at the junction of 3 roads, one on the east goes to Kolahoi, one on the west goes to Sonamarg, one on the south goes to Pahalgám.

On July 26th we started from Lidderwat at 8. a. m. The road runs along the side of the mountains with a torrent flowing round them, making a deep ravine. We had to ascend from about 9000 to 13000 ft. The coniferous belt ended and pasture lands began. Here and there we found some birch trees.

The red-billed chough is the only gregarious bird on this side. It bears some resemblance to a jackdaw. The rosefinch was seen among the rocks.

There are a few high grassy moraines before we come to the lake. So, after every terrace we imagined we should see the lake, hence we were full of excitement. After much fatigue and weariness we forgot all the trouble of the road when we caught sight of this beautiful lake.

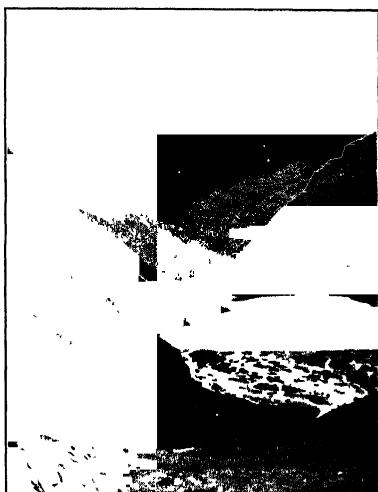
Tár Sar. (The lake of Tárá, a goddess). This lies amidst the mountains. Its waters are blue but transparent. It is really a glorious sight to sit on its sacred shore and watch the rising of the waves when a breeze blows. It is shaped like an almond.

We bathed in it. The shepherd who was sitting by its shore murmured. " You should not bathe in this sacred lake, Saints only can



KOLAHOI PEAK (17,992 ft.)

Gwashi Bror, the Goddess of Light)



HAR BHAGWAN NAG (13,000 ft.)

Har Nag Valley and beyond the Baltal Range



HIKERS AT TAR SAR (12,500 ft.) *Note the canoe on the lake*



Mr. Thompson *R. N* *S. L.* *S. C. K.*

BATHING IN A MOUNTAIN LAKE (12,500 ft.)



THE SNOUT OF KOLAHOI GLACIER

A tourist with a bunch of Corydalis thyrsiflora

do so". One of us asked him "How long have you been coming here?" "My grandfather and my father used to come and I have been coming with my flock for 40 years," was his reply. "Have you ever felt the presence of the Great Power in such a sacred place?" we asked. "What a simpleton you are!" the shepherd answered. "Listen, sir. People entrust their flocks to me and sometimes I sell a lamb for Rs. 2/- or Rs. 1/8/- and insist on my customers returning me the skin and the head of the animal, so that I can show them to the owners and can tell them that the lamb was eaten by a panther or a wild beast. Do you think that with such a sinful mind I shall ever be able to feel the presence of the Supreme Power?"

We know what sin is but we go on committing it. We are helpless without Divine Grace.

We started back at 3. p. m. and arrived at our camp at 5. p. m. At seven we had rain and a hail storm. The thunder was rumbling and the lightning flashing.

During the night an animal (probably a flying fox) visited our camp, tore R. N.'s turban and the sheepskin of a coolie and carried off a chicken.

On July 27th. we removed the camp to Kolahoi. No sooner had we left the place than it began to rain.

The road is stony and very rough. It goes along a ravine, and a torrent gushes forth in milky foam close by. On both sides of this ravine pin-shaped pinnacles of high mountains try to pierce through the clouds. The griffon vultures hover round these invincible forts to defend them from their enemy the weather, which is too strong for them. Year after year it

dislocates rocks which fall down and block the way.

At Reyil we entered a meadow where we crossed seven branches of a stream flowing from Sona-sar. We crossed the Lidder at Kolahoi-in-kot and pitched our tent on its left bank.

Kolahoi is a small valley. It is a flower bed of Senecio chrysanthemoides (mongol) split by the Lidder into two meadow lands. Here are some 6 temporary huts of Gujars who come here with their cattle for June, and leave in mid-August.

On July 28th. the Sahib during an evening walk found a fenstalle stone at the foot of the mountain and was successful in finding the bed from which it had dropped.

Next day some of the members started for Dudh Nág. Half a mile below the Kolahoi glacier on the left of the torrent there is a temporary colony of bakirbans (goatherds). Here we crossed the stream and asked some shepherds where the Nág was. They pointed out the direction but could not show us the way. We struck out a path for ourselves. It was very steep. We crawled like goats. We could see peak after peak, but not the Nág itself. After three hours continual climbing we stood on the shore of the Nág.

It lies on the top of a plateau 14,000 ft. high. It is circular in shape and milky in colour. On one side there is a cliff of enormous height above a glacier which feeds the Nág. On the other side there is a lovely pasture scattered with scented flowers and fragrant herbs of various kinds.

We had no food except the milky aqua of the spring in front of us.. We had previously thought it quite near our camp. We drank the

nectar of the Nág and turned to the left where we found a pony-track. It took us 35 minutes to stand on the slope overlooking the Kolahoi glacier.

It is a river of ice with rows of crags, deep fissures, and seracs. It has many colours. The stones of the lateral moraines when falling in the fissures makes a thundering noise together with the water running under the glacier. The southern peak of Kolahoi 17,992 feet stands in the middle like a Colossus, (Kola = stream, har = a wreath). The native name is Gwashibrör. (Gwash = light, brör = a goddess).

The clouds were encircling us and it began to rain. We lost our way. A Gujar girl who was gathering meadow vegetables guided us and cheered us by her musical songs and led us to the right path.

In our descent we collected some flowers for pressing and some vegetables for eating. We presented a bunch of Corydalis thrysiflora to Mrs. Stokoe who was camping below the glacier. This flower is common in the glacier swamp. We observed a willow warbler on a birch tree, a yellow-tailed warbler with spots on its throat, pigeons, redbilled choughs, and the white throated dippers, (raising and lowering their bodies).

Next day several Gujars came to us for medicine, to some we gave bismuth, to some purgative pills, to others quinine pills, while the Sahib's treatment to the patients was either cascara or cinammon. This proved effective most cases.

The Sahib did not return at the expected time. We organised a search party with lanterns and collected several Gujars. The news spread among them that the Sahib was lost. We looked here and there among the rocks. We once heard the report of the gun and afterwards found him

coming down the mountain in search of the fenstalle bed. This happened on several occasions.

On July 31st. we walked to the Rawal ravine to collect flowers We saw several silted lakes at the foot of minor glaciers.

A good number of vultures were hovering over the craggy tops of the mountains and there were wagtails near the stream.

We found out in the evening that it was the Sahib's birthday. We wished him many happy returns of the day.

August 3rd. Cloudy and rainy. In the evening we had a walk to a forest nursery. We saw fresh snow on the mountain tops in the vicinity. The whole afternoon was spent in restoring peace between a Gujar and his wife whom he was beating. His guilty conscience bore the threat of punishment calmly. We made him wash his wife's feet.

Some of us remained at the camp, while the others went to have a look at the glacier. This time we did not cross the bridge but went by the left side. We came to the base of the glacier. Here the terminal moraines are composed of huge boulders. We viewed the whole glacier from the base with the colossal Kolahoi peak, 17,992 feet high, above it. The icy projection on its surface was awe-inspiring.

We descended right down over these huge boulders to have a look at the icy cave from where the Lidder rises. There we saw four English ladies, one of whom had fainted on account of the strong sun. When she recovered we had a talk with her. She remarked, "I am wonder-struck at the agility of the Sahib," and indeed it was surprising how he managed to walk over these boulders. During the Great War in France the Sahib had lost his right leg from

the hip and it was no joke to walk on a crutch over these boulders. Down below we saw several snow pigeons and a white throated dipper.

On August 6th. we went out for an excursion to Sona Sar (golden lake). We started at 9 a. m. We had our tea at 8. 30. and took about 10 buns with us. The path runs along the Reyil ravine and turns to the right and passes into Basmai ravine.

We saw a fox in its lair under an enormous rock. The white-backed vultures were hovering over us. The Basmai ravine opens into a small valley, probably the bed of a small lake now silted up. There was a shepherd there with his flock.

Down below Sona Sar on the right the path goes over a steep slope where it is not easy for an ordinary man to pass. My pen cannot describe how the Sahib managed to get over it. My heart beat within me, lest the Sahib should slip and fall into the nallah. He took off his boot and sock, scrambled barefooted on his hands and crossed to the other side.

The flow of the Sona Sar at its outlet is very fascinating. Just as a silversmith might pour molten silver out of the crucible, in the same way the transparent water of the lake rushes down the rocks in a silvery streak. A man with the least developed aesthetic sense cannot help admiring the sublime beauty of nature. She forces her way into the mind of the onlooker.

We arrived there at 12 P. M. It is a ll lake half the size of Tár Sar, lying at the base of Basmai Galli 13,885 feet high. We can see here the conspicuous beds of the Basmai anticlyne. We ate biscuits with cooked leaves of Oxyria digyna (Tsokil). The sky grew cloudy. We left at 12-5. At one P. M. We had a hail

storm as prophesied by the Sahib. The Sahib went back by the usual way, but we climbed the mountain and descended into the Kolahoi valley. At the top we could see the Kolahoi peak, an isolated lancet piercing the sky. We arrived back at 4 p. m. In the evening we witnessed an exciting bull-fight near the camp. It took place on an island in the torrent.

On August 7th. Mr. Thompson went up as usual to the mountain slope to identify the fenstalle bed. He had blisters on his hands, armpits and on his foot. R. N. and I went after him and brought back some stones bearing fossil impression which he had found. We observed a kestrel hovering on its wings.

August 8th. The night before we examined the map of the district and agreed to go to Dudh Sar. Just as a general before attacking the enemy's lines consults the map, in the same way we always consulted the map in order to attack the place of interest in a high latitude.

Our plan of going to Dudh Sar was abandoned owing to the fact that the Sahib lost his purse from his pocket the day before, when examining the bed of fenstalle. So the party determined to follow the crutch marks of the Sahib. We made a thorough but fruitless search for the missing purse in the bushes and long grass of the mountain slope.

We left early in the morning at 9.30. and carried some 8 buns and some potatoes with us. The Sahib had his breakfast early. We wanted him to carry the tiffin with him but he refused saying that it could be sent to him afterwards..

From the base of the hill we took a different path, and came to a huge slab where a rill trickles down. Here we sat down to have our breakfast. It was 11 a. m. The Sahib was

in another ravine and we followed him, beating bushes and grass on our right and left in search of his purse. When we ascended high up, the Sahib waited for tiffin. There was no sign of the servant. So R. N. and S. L. were sent to show the servant the path to be taken and to send him on at once.

Instead of going down they climbed to a higher peak which they thought might be an easier way and less steep. They failed to find it so. They descended towards the Sona Sar side where they had a talk with a shepherd. When they came to the camp in a round about way they learned that the servant had been sent off to the Sahib with the tiffin basket.

Master N. K., the Sahib and I began to climb higher and higher. The Sahib felt very hungry and waited sometime for tiffin, but the servant did not turn up. From here the slope is very very steep. We climbed on all fours. The Sahib moved on, on his crutch and stick, hungry and with sore hands. Still he did not lose interest in geology and examined all the stones on his right and left to identify the fenstalle bed.

When we gained the summit we wished to have something to eat. The Sahib was desirous to have tea at the top. Everything would have been right if we had carried something for Sahib in our pockets. Several times he sat down to take rest. The foolish servant stayed at the foot or might have climbed one fourth of the way, but did not come to the top. The top of the whole range is like a serrated edge and a footpath goes along it. From here we surveyed Sona Sar, and the side valleys that are hidden behind the mountains. The places round here are geologically very

important. The top on which we climbed is a fenstalle bed. The two other tops next to it are sandstone and slate respectively. The fenstalle bed runs in a curve along the rib of the mountains to the base. This was a geological discovery. In future I hope a section named fenstalle bed will be shown on the next geological chart of that mountain. At the top I saw the blue-throat rock-warbler with orange body and heard its sweet twitter.

A man with an empty stomach does not fully appreciate the beauty of Nature and his temper gets irritated a bit, but we were eating, chewing and digesting the sublime natural beauty which was an antidote to our hunger.

It was 6-45 P. M. When we began to descend, we were encircled with heavy clouds and our clothes were wet.

I tied the camera with my handkerchief to my neck, N. K. girded his loins with his turban and we began to descend. The slope was very steep. We sat down on the dense herbage and began to slip on our backs, holding grass roots with our hands and feet. Sometimes our hands were scratched by thorny bushes, sometimes we caught hold of prickly shrubs and sometimes thistles pricked us through our clothes and sometimes we were stuck in slimy rills.

This was not all. In descending I was foolish enough to dislodge stones and in front of me were N. K. and the Sahib. How they managed to escape from being rolled down I do not know. We began to near the base. N. K. saw S. L. with the tiffin coming towards the Sahib. It was about 9-45 P. M. The Sahib asked him whether the pony was ready to carry him to the camp.

The darkness fell and we began to grope like the blind in grass and stones. The only light which we saw was distant candles of the camp, the bright sheet of the silvery Lidder and the quartz sparkling in the stones. S. L. guided us and the Sahib rode on the horse.

We saw our coolies coming towards us with a lantern and we realized that we were once more nearing our camp. We reached our camp like fasting, weather-beaten, sunburnt, pilgrims physically tired but in high spirits.

We exchanged stories of our adventures with each other. We had our meal at 12-30 a. m. and turned in at 1-15 a. m.

August 9th. was a fine day. We saw several parties of peasants coming up to these meadows with salt for the shepherds of their respective flocks.

S. L. and R. N. were sent to look for the purse again. In the evening the Sahib and I went once more to have a last look for the lost treasure.

We procured 6 ponies from the Naib Tehsildar for the removal of the camp.

On August 10th. we left Kolahoi at 10 a. m. Above Lidderwat in the small flat glade we saw a red-flanked bush robin. Leaving Lidderwat we came to Sekiwas (place of sand). We saw some vultures and eagles. I was told that among them was a golden eagle, but I failed to identify it.

Sekiwas is a nice camping ground. It is about 11,152 feet high and therefore exposed to the wind. On the four sides there are 4 gaps between the mountains, hence the wind could be very strong. Here the wild roar of the torrent changes into the soft babbling of the stream. There are no trees. The mountain slopes look

like well-trimmed velvet turf.

On the East we had a clear view of the Kolahoi peak. She is just like a bride veiling her face with clouds, waiting eagerly to marry Harmoukh her husband.

Here and there on the opposite side we saw only a few birch trees and juniper bushes so it was not easy to get fuel.

Next day we left Sekiwas at 9-50 a. m. The sky looked gloomy. The road goes along the side of a small torrent. The vegetation on the slopes is very poor and most mountain spurs are devoid of clay. This has been worn away by the ice which remains for a long time on the sides. The rays of the sun are less powerful on these spurs.

The call of the jungle crow, the whooping voice of the owl, and the whistle of the marmot were heard among the stones.

We had a shower of rain and it continued drizzling. Down at the foot of the Yemher (the staircase of the angel of death) Pass there is a flat marshy plot.

The Sahib went along the stony slope of the hill leaving the main path. This was due to the foolishness of his groom who did not tell him where to dismount and where to ride. So, going along this slope he was very tired and had his tiffin directly he descended from the stony and rocky spurs.

We reached the summit of the pass. It is 13,452 feet high. The descent is very steep. It is nothing but stones. On the left is a very steep precipice and indeed it is the staircase of the angel of death.

It is very interesting to see how the pony men help a pony in going down the pass. One holds its tail, two stand on each side and

make it go down slowly. If they get safely through the pass they will offer tea in the name of Saint Kahanov (Eleven names). On the left you will see a perpendicular precipice. Many a time ponies with loads miss their footing and fall down in the nallah like a rolling rock. There are two small lakes at its base. On the left is Kem Sar, and on the right is Yem Sar.

After crossing the pass it rained in torrents. We took shelter in a shepherd's tent. The old shepherdess was kind and gentle. She gave us all the help she could.

In such weather we left our kind hostess and walked towards Kulan. We began to see pasture lands and birch trees. The lower spurs of the Yemher are luxuriant in vegetation and look magnificent. Where we entered the Kulan forest, the coniferous belt meets the pasture belt and we saw birch and fir trees.

It began raining hard. The peal of the rolling thunder and the dazzling light of the lightning were in full swing. We were kneading mud with our feet, and our turbans and coats were dripping water. Some of us fell four times, some seven times, some managed to keep their balance and did not actually fall on the mud.

The wind blew. It did not help to disperse the clouds, but enhanced our troubles. It shook the heavy pine trees and the sheets of water poured down on us from their needles. The flowers on our left and right and the call of warblers cheered us till we reached Zaiwan. Zaiwan is a glade in the midst of the mountains. It is not flat. It is about 10,000 feet high. Here we met Mrs. Drysdale & Miss Mary Williams of California whom I had met before in the Mission School, and I had a good talk with her.

She is a friend of Dr. Kate Knowles M. D. who was a great helper of Kashmiri women.

When she saw us in this condition drenched to the skin, she offered us shelter and to some of us she gave warm restoring medicine. We told her the aim of our trip and she was much interested. She prepared hot tea for our Sahib who was half an hour behind us. He had several falls and had hurt his hand. In his wet condition he entered the tent of the old lady who welcomed him heartily. Hot tea was served. The Sahib took it and thanked the old ladies.

We camped near the tent of the ladies and the first thing was to light a bonfire and crack jokes round the blazing flames. The old ladies invited our Sahib to dine with them.

In the evening the ladies' servant came to us and complained of headache. We gave him cascara. The next day at 5 P. M. I went to see the ladies and I told them that we had given cascara to their servant. They were surprised for they told me that he had been given castor oil by Miss Williams and fruit salt by Mrs. Drysdale. They expected that in the morning they would find him half dead. How he managed to recover is a mystery.

It rained the whole night of Aug. 13th. till 10 a. m. in the morning. We decided to go down to Kulan. We left Zaiwan at noon and came down to the forest. There was no thick undergrowth of vegetation, but only a few herbs here and there. We heard the whistling call of the bluetail ending with *chet*, *chet* and some melodious calls of two other birds which I could not identify. A few miles further on the undergrowth is very dense.

At the foot of Zaiwan the deciduous region begins. We crossed the Sind and arrived

at Kulan at 1 P. M. It is a small village with three shops. Here we halted fcr two hours.

The road goes along the Sind. It is well constructed On either side there are no trees but thick bushes. From these bushes we hear the buntings and sweet call of the pale bush warbler. " You must not mix with him, he will beat you ". Several flocks of jackdaws were seen and a jungle crow was feeding its young. It began to rain hard. After Gangangir the road is stony. It goes round a spur where the stones all along that side are very loose and in winter or in the rainy season they fall and block the road. The valley closes in. Here one looks on the ashy-headed Basmai peak with its icy ravines.

We entered the marg. It is a flat piece of land more extensive than Pahalgám or Gulmarg. The view is magnificent. It is thickly forested.

It continued raining. It was 7 P. M. when we reached Sonamarg. Our luggage was far behind us. We could not camp in the open. We had been soaked to the skin. The ponies arrived at dusk. The Postmaster received us kindly and gave us a room to stay in. Another old boy Pt. Vasadev, the Police Sergeant, heard of our arrival and he at once sent his man to tell us that he would have dinner prepared for us. The Sahib lodged in the inn and slept on the floor as his own bed was wet.

For the night we slept in one of the Post Office rooms which was full of fleas and bugs. N. K. spent his whole night with forceps in his hand taking out bugs from the holes in the walls. The fleas and bugs combined their armies and detachment after detachment was sent till N. K. and R. N. were tired out. In the morning a truce was signed and we left

the room and pitched our camp outside.

August 14th. We ran short of money and all our resources were exhausted. One of us went to see Miss Macdonald to whom a telegram from C. M. S. Office and a letter from Rev. J. S. Dugdale was shown. She very kindly gave us a loan of Rs. 60/-. In the evening the Sahib himself went and thanked the lady. On the way we saw several bushchats, cinnamon-headed sparrows and various kinds of birds. How I should love to be here one day with Mr. B. B. Osmaston and acquire more knowledge about my aerial friends!

August 15th. We left for Baltal at 12 a. m. The road runs along the slope of this mountain. It is a good road and metalled naturally by falling stones. At the end of every spur in front of us we saw a high snow-covered peak. The trees on the right bank of the Sind are of stunted growth.

Here and there we could see some barley fields. The women work in the fields carrying manure to fertilize the crops while the men sit idle, looking on while their wives carry the loads. The basket rests on the woman's back and is tied to her shoulder. The flow of the Sind is not so rapid here. There are groves of fir and poplar trees every now and again. Near Baltal there are several small springs. Flocks of red-billed choughs were seen feeding.

At Baltal the Amoravati (the Amar Nath stream) joins the Sind. It took us three hours to arrive here. The Dak Bungalow is on raised ground above the confluence of the two streams. It is well surrounded by trees. Here the chirping of the gold-finches, cinnamon-headed sparrows, the orange-coloured bulfinches and the tree creepers was heard like the musical sounds of

a piano.

We got up at 6 a. m. on August 16th. and started for the Zoji pass. At the foot of the pass we saw a pair of hoopoes and some doves. The road runs zigzag to avoid the abrupt steepness of the mountain. In some places the crags lie right over half way like a projecting veranda and in some places they stand like huge open doors. Most of the rocks are of slate. They are turned into clay by weathering, and the clay in course of time by the internal heat of the earth is turned into rocks, so rock and clay are interdependent. High up, the ravine is covered with ice and the Sind passes under it. The chilly cold wind blows over the pass, and the tip of our nose and ears were benumbed with cold. We walked some two miles down on the other side of the pass and saw several Tibetan peaks heavily covered with fresh snow. From here a path goes to the Amar Nath cave. Dr. Neve was the first person to find this path. We saw about 40 eagles eating a carcass.

The Sahib met us at the top of the pass when we were descending. There are some good flowers but compared with the flowers of the Dudh Nág valley they shrink into insignificance. The vegetation owing to the scanty rainfall is very poor.

We arrived back at Baltal at 11. 30. We had our tea and started back to our camp at Sonamarg where we arrived at 6 p. m.

The Sahib preferred to spend the night in the Dak bungalow. This house is on a nice spot and the view is glorious. In the distance the Basmai peaks can be seen. The twitter of the finches answers the murmur of the stream. On our way back we met the two American ladies Miss Williams and Mrs. Drysdale who

showed their sympathy when we were at Zaiwan.

August 17th. was a fine and bright day. The Sahib returned from Baltal. He pitched his tent on a plateau of Thajwás, which was Dr. Neve's favourite camping ground.

We had an evening walk towards the last plateau of Thajwás. We sat on a huge boulder in the stony glen facing the setting sun. On our left were the high naked peaks with glaciers on their sides, at our back were the fir and birch trees and on our right ashy-coloured mountain tops with needle shaped pinnacles. The glorious sun began to hide his radiant face and the shadows on our right and left began fast to approach us, till we were in shade and we observed the last rays of the setting sun shooting into the atmosphere over the mountain tops.

August 18th. was a clear day. We were pleased to see Miss Williams back from Baltal and offered her tea in our tent. She was kind enough to accept our hospitality and N. K. had an interesting discussion with her on her projected book. Afterwards we learnt that she had a slight fall when going to Thajwás. We saw Miss Mallinson with her brother and a friend at Thajwás.

Next day we moved our camp to Gund. All the mountain slopes facing towards the North are densely forested. Probably the reason is that the winds saturated with moisture strike against these slopes, they are forced to rise high, when they rise they expand, their temperature decreases and they fall as rain; while on the other hand the slopes facing to the South are in rain shadow. We saw several European rollers. We had heavy rainfall during the night.

On August 20th. we left for Kangan. The Gujar huts are scattered on the mountain slopes amidst the maize fields. At Harganiwan there is

a big rock in the Sindh river dedicated to Ganish (The god of obstacles). At several places we saw coolies busily engaged in separating logs from a log-jam. It is interesting to see big logs stuck on the rocks. On our way we met Dr. Vosper and Mr. Noble of Edwards College. At several places the cloud bursts had brought down the sand and stones and devastated several acres of land. Big up-rooted trees showed the path of the flood. Here we found we had lost our camera.

We left Kangan on August 21st. early in the morning. The valley gets bigger and bigger and mountain scenery gets less and less; separation diminishes beauty while union enhances it. The ears of rice were beginning to hang down in the fields. The Srinagar birds came to meet us on the way to bid us welcome-the thrush. the bulbul, the blue kingfisher, the hoopoe, the king crow and the mynas.

Near the suspension bridge we saw a school boy with his satchel under his arm. One could not help thinking about school and the knowledge one acquires to impart to young souls, so that they may be as beautiful in character as the country is beautiful. When gold is in a liquid state one can mould it in any way one likes, but when it is hard it is difficult to give it a desired shape. We passed the last off-shoot of the mountain and came to Ganderbal.

It is a haven of rest. Everything seems calm and quite like the mind of a hermit. In the presence of the calm flow of the Sindh and the cool and refreshing shade of the plane trees, one could not but think of the boisterous mountain torrents, the huge boulders of the Kolahoi glacier, our crawling over the Dudh Nág slope, the curved fenstalle bed of the Kolahoi mountain, the transparent waters of Tár Sar, the chilly breeze

of the Zoji, the dripping turbans of Zaiwan-all these things passed before our eyes.

Here I cast a look on the mountains around the valley and they seemed to me smaller and shrunk to a lower level. We engaged a boat at Ganderbal to have a look at the water birds.

The flutter of the pied-kingfisher, the swift flight of the whiskered tern, the white wings of the water pheasant, the red over-coverts of the young paradise fly-catcher, the graceful flight of the kite, all these things beautify the weedy surface of the lake. The lotus flower amid its orbicular leaves is the chief ornament of the place.

We landed at Saidah Kadal. The sky was serene. We entered the city.

The Cave of Amar Nath via Pahalgam and Arau.

Pahalgám is becoming the centre of activities of visitors from the plains and is the end of wheeled traffic. The Kashmir Government is making all the necessary arrangements for the comfort of tourists. A beautiful road has been constructed via Tsandanwári (Thánin) so that a person can easily ride to the cave. Of course, some moderate ascents and descents cannot be avoided. There are a good number of paths which lead to the cave. One of the paths passes over the Har Bhagwán Ghaṭi (12,729 ft.) and this we decided to take.

The party started from Pahalgám. The path is a pony track. On either side of the path Impatiens Roylei (Trul) and Stacys (mint family) were in full bloom. Under pines grew Viburnum nervosum (Kulim) and witch-hazel (Poh). On some

of the former plants were found dodder (Kukilapot). It is a parasite and feeds on the plants. The plants get their nourishment from the earth and air through roots and leaves, while parasites live on plants. Probably there are two kinds of dodder (Cuscuta). One with fine yellow threads giving bead-like white flowers, the other with thick pinkish yellow threads. The other common plant was Mentha salvestris (Wena). Occasionally we heard the notes of the whistling thrush above the torrent.

It began to rain after we pitched our tents at Arau. The morning of the 21st. July was cloudless. The crescent moon rested on the fir covered peak and the sunrise on the naked tops was lovely. Arau is a quiet camping ground. I was told that there is a rock from which a seat is carved and sweet water from a springlet passes into a stone basin and flows out.

The path from here runs under the huge shady fir trees. We were able to find edible mushrooms (hedar or henda) under the trees. Arisaema tortuosum (the top of this plant is like the head of a snake) and Podyphyllum emodi (wan wángun) with its red fruit, and Oxyria dgyna (Tsokil) grew round the rocks. We found several varieties of Impatiens. Several clusters of blue poppies grew among round stones after we crossed the bridge at Girwad.

There is a flat spot at Gagari Pather where we had our morning meal. The mushrooms and Oxyria digyna cooked together make a good dish. In the centre of this spot was a big rock and on the top of it grew Polygonum, Senecio, Cynoglossum, Epilobium and a kind of umbelliferaea. This place was not unlike Khalan in the Lidder Valley. Towards the right bank of the stream was a small fall. We saw a slaty blue flycatcher,

a pied woodpecker and a jungle crow.

Beyond here the slopes were covered with wild dock, Jacob's ladder, Senecio, Cynoglossum, Swertia and Verbascum thapsus (Bolar Kon). The leaves of the latter plant are ground and mixed with butter as a remedy for itch. In the middle of the torrent on a big rock were four white capped redstarts moving gaily about. The bird's *loud plaintive squeak t-e-e-e-e* will at once betray it.

Armin is a flat spot and a beautiful camping ground. It is covered with Senecio chrysanthemoides (mongol), which along with dock is generally found between 9,000 and 10,000 ft. above sea level. A stream flows from the N. E. by the side of the valley and reminded us of Sang-i-safed valley. The northern aspect of mountains is covered with fir and birch, while the soüthern aspect owing to insolation and weathering is rocky and precipitous. There were 3 Gujar families living under rocks on the right bank and 3 Gujar sheds on the opposite side. Mountain flanks gave rise to three springs, two of which were dry. Spring water is clearer than glacial water. A pair of grey wagtails and a whistling thrush were eating insects in the stream. It took our pack ponies 3½ hrs. to reach here.

On the 22nd. July at dawn we saw a pair of brown dippers sitting on a boulder raising and lowering their bodies. It was very interesting to see how they dive after water insects in the rushing torrent. Their flight is straight almost touching the water, while wagtails fly in curves. A flock of the yellow billed choughs were manoeuvring about the slope.

An ascent of about 300 ft. led us to a flat spot called Arm Pathri. The floral vegetation on our right and left was grand. There were

beds of Salvia hians, Morino longifolio, Papaver nudicaule, Corydalis thyrsiflora, which grows near water. Near lower Náfaran there is a beautiful fall. We found three Gujar sheds. The upper Náfaran is a fairly large valley where no fuel is obtainable. The mountain flanks and some snow beds give rise to the Armin stream, which joins the Lidder at Arau.

Before we ascend the pass there is a big smooth rock on the right side of the pass. The slope of the pass is covered with slate, shale and scree. Among the slate we found Corydalis Govaniana and Corydalis crassifolia with 3 fan shaped thick leaves and purple flowers. The last part of the pass was a series of steps where the ponies had to be unloaded. The view from the pass was superb. Right at the foot of the pass was turquoise green Har Nág (the lake of peace) shining like a glittering eye at the head of an emerald green body. A part of the lake was silted up. Towards the N N. E. were the snowy peaks of Báltal with glaciers between them. On the right was the Har Bhagwan peak (16,041 ft.), and on our left the Kolahoi peaks surrounded by glaciers. On the top of the pass were several plants of Potentilla curviseta.

The slopes of Har Nág (12,269 ft.) are steep, covered with Geum and Potentilla atrosanguinea. There is a pony track, but in bad weather it becomes very slippery and dangerous. The lake appeared like a sleeping yák with its bushy tail. There was a shepherd with his flock on the lake side. He told us the following story:-

Har Nág sent his son and daughter-in-law to find a spot where he could live near Kolahoi (Gwáshi-Brör). They went back and told him that there was room for them but not for him. He then sent his son-in-law, who returned

with the news that there was room for his father-in-law but not for himself. So he cursed and petrified his son and daughter-in-law and made room for his son-in-law at his feet. Hence the lakelet which represents the bushy tail of the yák is called Zámtör Nág (Son-in-law spring). The two rocks towards the silted part of the lake are the petrified son and daughter-in-law.

On the first day of their arrival, the shepherds kill a sheep and cook their food in well washed utensils. Before they eat they place a dish full of cooked rice and meat on the shore of the lake as an offering to the spring deity.

We pitched our tents about 200 yards away from the lake. Marsh primula was abundant and a white breasted dipper was after its prey. This valley is full of marmots' (drins) burrows. These are as large as a big cat and brown in colour. These animals have been found living above 9,000 ft. in dreary regions. When they hoot at intruders they stand on their hind legs and join their fore legs like a kangaroo. They are sometimes killed for their fur. The burrows are zig-zag. A copper coloured lizard (tamar) is also found at a similar height. The naked peaks are the home of ibex and stags, which descend in winter and early spring.

A shepherd told us of his encounters with a brown bear, how he threw live charcoal out of a kángri in its face, and then gave it a blow on the head with an axe and found it dead three days later.

The valley is inhabited by shepherds, Gujars and bakörbán's, (goatherds). On Fridays Gujars make milk cakes from buffaloes' milk. It is boiled and some churned milk is put in it till it turns sour. It is strained and cakes are made from the residue. Cakes are also made

from churned milk, but they are thicker and not so good. The cakes are fried in oil or ghee and eaten.

The morning of 23rd. July was very cold. The wind blowing over the gap and glaciers makes the valley chilly. We divided our party into batches. A party started early before it thawed to survey the eastern part of the Kolahoi glacier and to see whether it would be possible to climb the northern peak. They climbed a ridge near the lake, where they found Sassurea sacra and Saxifraga Jacquemotiana. They crossed a snowfield and saw a layer of frozen hail-stones 3″ thick. They went as far as an icefall.

The other party swam in the Har Nág. A sand piper probably Tringa ochropus was seen. After noon they climbed a grassy spur covered mostly with Jurinea macrocephala. They crossed the torrent flowing out of the glacier. Following the edge of the glacier, they climbed up a nallah through which they could not have descended. Continuing they reached another gentler slope from which they came down. There is a pass which leads to the Kolahoi valley. Over the pass is a beautiful view of a snow field and a lake as we were told by a bakōrbán.

There were deep crevasses in the glacier and ice pinnacles projected like the door of a fort studded with iron nails. The colour of the ice was pink, the rocks were pink, the water flowing out of the glacier was also pink. So much so, that our feet were also coloured pink when we waded. Like attracts like. Epilobium latifolium which graced the islets at the mouth of the glacier was also pink. Several beds of Chorospora sabulosa, Marsh primula and Edelweiss we saw on our way back. Several snow pigeons and kites were hovering about.

There are no trees except a few juniper bushes. There is a track from here to Báltal and Sona Marg.

A fortnight later Mr. Jacob took a party of masters to climb Gwashi Brár (Kolahoi). They had a guide, Aziz Ganáni, with them who had climbed the peak 11 times. Two members of the club, masters, N. L. Bakaya and C. Pandit gained the top after spending a night at a height of 16,000 ft.

The glow of the sunrise of 24th. July on the glittering conical mountain peaks and glaciers was very attractive. A pair of brown dipper and a yellow wagtail were catching their morning meal. We left the place about 10. a. m. The lower part of the pass was grassy while the higher was shale, in which we found Androsacia, Saxifrages, Corydalis crassifolia and of course there were other Alpine flowers with whose names I do not like to burden the mind of the reader.

There are two paths from the top. One goes along the Har Bhagwan Galli (14,086ft). At Rabi Marg there is a lake on the way, where, according to the story of a shepherd one may meet fairies and hear them singing. If a person gets enamoured he loses his life. We were told that this was not a pony track. At the foot of this pass lies Astán Marg. The other route goes along Rázdōn (13,200 ft.), longer but easier for ponies. We chose the latter route, not with the hope of being entangled in the meshes of fairies, but because it was an easier path.

The view from the pass was entrancing. On the north west stood the colossal Kolahoi peak like a pointed triangular prism embossed in snow, with two thumbs projecting on each side. On the south west stood the unconquered part of

Shishram Nág Range with battlements and turrets of about one dozen peaks not less than 16,000 ft. with glaciers between them. The Har Bhagwan valley appeared like a green jewel clasped by the ashy coloured peaks, while the Astán Marg slopes were covered with fir trees.

Kolahoi is the name of the valley. It is a pity that the Europeans have given this name to the peak which retains its old name Gwashi Bror, *the goddess of light.* It catches the first rays of the rising sun, hence its name.

We descended the green slopes. The path ran round and round spurs. Trollus acculis and Swertia were very common. A flock of red-billed choughs flew over us when we sat at Dán Beran where we met a shepherd.

At the foot of the pass is Hára Waṭ where we met a Gujar family looking after buffaloes. The path ascends from here to Astán Marg. The route was formerely much frequented by the pilgrims from Amar Nath.

It took our ponies 8 hours to reach here. This route was 7 miles longer than the Rabi Marg route.

Astán Marg is a pent up valley. On its north west is Rabi Marg, on the east is Sása Kōṭ (13,860 ft.). Gōb Dalan is the watershed between Shishiram Nág stream and Astan Marg stream. The water flows out of the mountain flanks, hence it is transparent. .Wood is available. Birch trees are in good condition. Several families of shepherds, Gujars and bakörbáns live here. The folds in the mountains are very conspicuous and the summits are like serrated edges giving fantastic shapes according to the individual imagination.

The Sása Kōṭ slope is gravel, sand and scree, hence during bad weather this pass is very difficult. Consequently the Kashmir Government

banned this route for pilgrims. At the foot of the pass there were flower beds of Edelweiss, dandelion, and Geranium growing among stones. A little higher Corydalis falconeri grew side by side, while Euphorbia and iris covered the higher slopes. Still higher Rododendron and creeping willow covered the slope below the naked peaks. The Oxalis digyna, yellow and pink Corydalis and saxifrage found their way near the top where the pack ponies go up with difficulty. It was through providence that a pony man and his pony were saved from being rolled down the precipice when the load fell over. All the peaks round about the pass were reduced to pebbles and sand owing to insolation and weathering and heaps of small stones were seen everywhere.

The other end of the pass showed us Hōtyōr Taláv *Murderer Tank* (13,642 ft.) valley and in the distance we saw Kadur Pantsál (*difficult Mountain*) meeting the horizon. The lake appeared like two expanded lobes of lungs with trachea. Once several hundred pilgrims perished here in a snow storm, so the people dreaded this lake.

The descent is gradual and there is a good pony track. The slopes are covered with alpine flowers and Trollus acculis and thyme was common. Lower down the general Amar Náth road joins this track. We met several shepherds with large flocks. There is a big rock called Nagára pal (*Drum rock*) near the road. The pilgrims beat it with stones and then throw them at it.

Pantsa Tarni (*Five crossings*) is the last stage in the Amar Náth pilgrimage where the pilgrims camp. The valley runs south east to north west and is drained by the Pantsa Tarni river. The main tributary rises from glaciers

while other small tributaries rise from the mountain side, hence their water is pure. During flood when all their tributaries join together, it is impossible to pass through the valley. There are sheds built by the Kashmir Government for the safety of pilgrims in bad weather.

We pitched our tents on the right bank towards the extreme end of the valley. The Government Officials were making bridges and mending the road for pilgrims. The pack ponies took 6 hours from Astán Marg to Pantsa Tarni.

Early next morning before the sunrise of July 26th. we started for the Cave. It is 4 miles distant. The road is beautiful with a moderate ascent. We saw the mouth of the cave from the end of the defile in the dreary region where wear and tear in rock, destruction and construction by water, Nature's prime elements, take place.

A friend of Dr. Duke writes " The scenery is wild, grand and more imposing than anything I have seen in Kashmir. It is the trip to make. I shall never forget it One felt the presence of the Maker of the Universe."

The peaks round about are all about 17,000 ft. above sea level. The two glaciers on the side of the defile give rise to the torrent which flows in front of the cave. The road owing to landslides partly passed over the frosen ice covering the torrent. There is an ascent of about 100 yds to the cave. A little rill named the Amravati (*Immortality*) flows from the top of the cave and passes over the limestone or gypsum layers, hence the colour of the water is milky and the silt is white.

The pilgrims bathe in the water of Immortality, (men and women separately), besmear themselves with the white silt of the rill and

put on new or well washed white clothes. Formerly they used to have loin cloth of birch bark. They enter the cave all white and spotless and forgetting self, become one with the Universal Soul. A local poet has said, "*When ye enter the cave, introspect and see whether you have installed the Almighty Eternal in the cave you live in.*"

The Cave (12,729 ft.) is in the side of a cliff of white mesozoic dolomite. Lime dissolves from the roof hence year by year the cave becomes bigger and bigger. It is about 60 ft. long 55 ft. broad and 50 ft. deep. There is an ice platform of a light blue colour in the north eastern corner. Some say it is really frozen springs varying according to seasonal temperature. On the platform on either side were two ice cones of about 1½ ft. high, not reaching the niche in the wall. There were some pieces of ice in another corner. It does not freeze wherever it drips. A natural phenomenon. There is an iron railing round the platform and also an iron enclosure outside. There were two pairs of snow pigeons (white body with a black bar on the tail) in the cave. A kind of warbler with a brown wash over black alighted to eat rice on the platform (*Pranali*).

Just outside the cave there were some plants of Corydalis crassifolia and a creeping willow with catkins exploding cottony stuff.

The cave faces towards the north. There is a ridge in front of it called Dámrishwar Bairau or Bairau Bál (14,000 ft.). Bairau is another aspect of Shivá which means *that which fills the universe.* He is beating a drum with his hands, keeping the universe in rhythm.

Formerly the pilgrims used to go over this ridge. When they reached the saddle of the

ridge, they had to go round its precipitous peak. In the bygone days it was said that some sadhus, in order to get rid of their physical body, threw themselves down over the rocks facing towards the cave thereby blending their souls with the Universal Soul. A better kind of worship would have been not to torture their physical frames but to live to serve and uplift humanity, to banish selfishness from this planet and be apostles of peace, good will and harmony.

Lower down on the other side of the ridge there was a rock underneath which was a narrow hole through which every pilgrim had to pass. This was called Garba Yátra (*Womb pilgrimage*). The underlying idea is of second birth, coming out fresh and sinless to meet one's Deity.

Amar Nath is an All India Pilgrimage. Every day there is a stream of visitors to this place. They hire a pony from Pahalgám and spend the night at Pantsa Tarni. Next morning after visiting the cave they go back to Pahalgám.

The chief day of the festival is on the full moon of August. (Sawan Purnámasi).

The Kashmir Government takes every precaution for the comfort of the pilgrims. At every stage there is a regular bazár and doctor, civil officers and police make all necessary arrangements. Of course in bad weather people scantily dressed suffer a good deal.

The Amaravati meets the Pantsa Tarni at Sangam (confluence). On returning, the pilgrims used to perform ceremonies to remember their dead. But now the path goes high over the ridge and this place has been abandoned. It is here that we meet the goat track from Báltal and this is only passable in early June when the snow lies frozen over the torrent. At Báltal, the Har Nág

stream joins the Amaravati which flows down in increasing volume and receives Gangabal water from the Wangat Nállah. It is then called the Sind and joins the Jhelum (Vitasta) at Shadipur (Prayág) sacred to the Hindus.

I am sorry we could not get time to survey the glaciers which feed the Pantsa Tarni, because some of us were very anxious to go to Pahalgám. So after having our food we left. The path rises gradually over the Rabi Bāl till it reaches the top of Mahā Gunas (*The great viper*). The descent begins from here to Waojen (12,230 ft.). The path on either side was rich in alpine flowers. Nearing Waojen there is a fall. A number of sheds have been built by the Government for pilgrims.

Waojen (12,230 ft.) is an exposed stage. The wind is very cold and strong. There is no wood except juniper bushes of stunted growth.

The view of Shisheram Nag (11.730 ft.) was picturesque. It stretched from east to west. On the eastern side there are two virgin glaciers which feed the lake. One appears black, full of crevasses, the other is a small one. The western slope was covered with Inula Royleana (Poshkar) and Iris. A sand piper and yellow wagtail were looking for insects.

Zōjpal is midway between Waojen and Tsandanwári (Thánin). Not very far from here after crossing the stream is a lovely lake, Sona Sar (Golden lake 12,595 ft.), well worth seeing. There is a route going over the Sona Sar pass(14,500 ft.) into the Wardwon valley. We stayed here for the night and the pack ponies arrived in 6 hrs.

Next day we started early in the morning. A flock of yellow billed chough flew over the birch trees. We descended the Pisu Hill. To avoid the steepness and inconvenience to visitors,

the Government is constructing another road for ponies.

We had our meal at Tsandanwári where we saw a number of visitors from the plains resting under the bracing breeze of the 5 needled pines. It is here that the stream from Astān Marg joins the one from Shishiram Nāg. The path at times kisses the torrent and at times winds high above the mountain spurs. The northern aspect of the pine clad mountains, the green turf-covered patches, and the gurgling of the rushing torrent refresh the vision. The southern aspect was covered with Verbascum thapsus (Bolar kon). One of the plants was 10 ft. high. In the afternoon we arrived in Pahalgám, the centre of civilisation.

After we had pitched our tents there was a deluge of rain. The torrent became a foaming river and the water became murky black. Such water is poisonous for trout, which get blinded and die.

During the night it cleared. The northern constellations spinning round the Polaris came in sight one by one, till they faded under the glare of the rising sun.

Tar Sar and Mar Sar.

Lovely was the drive of two hours in which the members of the Cashmir Climbing Club arrived at Pahalgám on July 14th. for their annual trek. The road was perfect.

The contractor supplied us with pack ponies and after examining their backs we loaded them. It began to drizzle and we left at 1-30 p. m. The path led through the forest. On our left, down in the torrent, we saw coolies with punting poles dislodging the logs from the log-jam. The contractors cut the wood and roll it down into the stream.

The elderberry with white umbrella-like flowers was in full bloom and thrushes and red-starts were enjoying the rapid flow of the stream.

In three hours' time we arrived at Arau, a distance of about 8 miles. It is a small village with a couple of dozen huts, entirely made of logs and unhewn planks, with no iron. A few willows grow round their huts and a few buck-wheat, maize, and potato fields surround the village. The fields are surrounded by fences made of branches on which meadow-buntings were feeding their young. Several kites were gliding to and fro

Here a stream flows from Katri Nāg on Danawat hillock to join the main stream from the left bank. A path leads to Har Nāg valley and thence to Baltal.

The fir trees (budul) begin to get less and less and the birch appears at this altitude. The path was shadeless over the meadow and it was better to start early. The wild dock (Wan Obuj) was very common. When young, this plant

is eaten and has a sour taste. The root is believed to cure boils.

Nearing Lidderawat, there was a small island in the torrent covered with yellow flowers —Erysimum altaicum (wan jafur), Corydalis Govaniana and a poplar. A stream from Tār Sar joins the Lidder. The route from the Sind valley meets the Lidder valley here. The bridge over the torrent must be strong for the pack ponies. We found two logs over which the Gujars cross. The bridge was two miles up Lidderwat and the ponymen carried the loads first on their shoulders and afterwards led the horses. We camped at Khalan on the right bank of the stream under sycamore (kunzal) and fir. All birch trees were dried up either by disease or because Gujars had stripped off the bark. There were three Gujar sheds with buffaloes and cows.

The morning of July 16th. was greeted by the sweet notes of whistling thrushes (Hazār Dāstan) at 4-50 a. m. The place was turned into an orchestra. The sun rose at 7-45 a. m.

In the pouring rain we left our camp to pay a flying visit to the snout of the Kolahai Glacier. We kept the path by the right bank of the river, over several beds of Caltha palastris till we came to the newly-built Gujar sheds at Satalanjan (seven branches) where the water from Sona Sar divides itself into several streams and enters the Lidder. The valley was covered with Senecio chrysanthemoides (mongol) and wild docks and the mountain slopes with birch trees. There was a bridge across the stream where we had camped for a fortnight with Rev. R. D. Thompson 15 years ago. It was about two and a half miles from this place to the snout of the Glacier. We caught a glimpse of the Kolahai Peak. We halted on a rock about a quarter of

a mile from the glacier. The boulders which had been so big and massive had been reduced to small stones during fifteen years of weathering. The snout appeared smaller and the river was like a silvery streak flowing out of a crucible. The glacier was strewed with lateral moraines. A pair of Alpine swifts and snow pigeons were observed. We got back drenched to the skin after four hours of incessant rain.

On Monday the 17th. we removed our camp. We followed the right bank of the stream and near Liddarwat we entered the ravine on the right. The whole slope was covered with rose bushes, Geums and yellow Potentillas. Vultures were hovering round the jagged peaks. Birch trees grew out of the joints of various strata of the mountains We crossed a snow bridge near Hámwás and followed the right bank of the stream flowing from Tár Sar and Sekiwas. We passed three Gujar huts. We had a view of Kolahoi Peak.

We camped between the confluence of the Tár Sar and Sekiwas streams. In front of us was an islet covered with Saliva hians, blue Corydalis and many different varieties of Alpine flowers. The valley was called a Dánda Bari (Bull's Crack). Stones smoothened by weathering were scattered all over the valley. In between them grew floral vegetation. The birch was the only tree here and this too was in a dying state.

Early next morning we started, and took the right bank of the Tár Sar stream. The path by the left bank goes over boulders provided the course taken is higher up over the grassy spurs. We met a shepherd with his flock. In two hours' time we reached the lake (12,500 ft.). We undressed and had a swim in it. We put together our rubber canoe and launched it. What a delight

it is to paddle a canoe. I remember when fifteen years ago Mr. Thompson (now Rev. R. D. Thompson) dived from a rock in the lake and Mrs. Eric followed his example on this occasion. The water was transparent light and very sweet. Compared to Koñsar Nág the banks had a gentler slope and the mountains were not so high. It is neither so deep nor so awe-inspiring. There is an excellent camping ground, and fuel can be procured by sending ponymen lower down as we did at Koñsar Nág.

After lunch we walked along the left bank of the lake and climbed a ridge (13,000 ft.). At its top was the demarcation line of Dachigám Rakh. The mist gathered and filled the head valley of Nágaberan concealing Már Sar from view. One could see Már Sar (the lake of Cupid) like the moon in a total eclipse. The mist cleared and the lake appeared a sheet of milk with a silvery streak of water draining the Dachigam valley and emptying itself into the reservoir which supplies the city of Srinagar. The Tár Sar slope of the ridge was covered with Geum elatum (Gogja pöter) and Jurinea macrecephalia (Dhupa). On the top we found a small variety of Androsace. It took us one and a half hours to reach the top. Here we missed Mr. Jacob who could not come owing to his indisposition. We gave him some specimens of Rhododendron anthopogon (Yenga Posh).

We descended and walked along the shore of the lake and sat down for sometime to absorb the natural beauty of the place. The breeze ruffled the surface of the water a little and the crest of the wavelets catching the sun's rays turned the whole sheet of water into sparkling diamonds. In such sublime situations peace and serenity prevail over man's selfishness.

Near the Western shore of the lake we

found two islets and a deep inlet where two small icebergs were floating. Many legends and superstitions are connected with these lakes. The southern slope was more or less precipitous. On the eastern side the place was covered with Potentillas. Redstarts and meadow buntings were pouring out their notes. We returned by the left bank.

On Wednesday at 7 a. m. after tea we struck our tents. On our way we had a clear view of the Kolahai Peak. A brown dipper was busy at his trade and yellow billed choughs were feeding their young. At Sekiwas there were some Gujar huts. Here several routes meet. On the right was the general path going over Yemher Pass (13,400 ft.) and landing at Kulan in the Sind valley via Zaiwan; the middle path going over Sorafrah ridge was merely a goat track, not fit for ponies, leading into Sorafrah valley. The left path which we took led us over moderate ups and downs till we entered a long defile called Zöj Marg. It was swampy and not unlike Dánzab. Here we found two shallow lakes named on the map Chanda Sar and Hoka Sar. Chanda Sar is a corrupt form of Tsandi Sar (*the lake of the goddess Tsandi, the destroyer of demons*). The terminus of the defile is Sona Mus, from which the descent began. Of course the descent for a couple of hundred yards is over shale and loose stones, but on the right and the left was the glorious floral vegetation next to Purmandal. There were beds of Primula rosea, Anemone tetrasepala, Codnopsis ovata, Caltha palustris, Rhododendron (arboreum and anthopogon) one with rosy flowers the other with small yellowish flowers, Lindelofia, Cynoglossum, Myosotis and many more varieties. There was a beautiful tiny water-fall flowing from Hoka Sar. There were

Gujars with their buffaloes and cows. We halted here to have our lunch.

We came down from the meadows through a densely forested area. We did not forget to gather mushrooms (hedar) for our evening meal. The path is not really a pony track, but it can be used if great care is taken. In some places it was really dangerous. We could manage our pack ponies all right. Looking back we could see the torrent rushing down in silvery foam between the dark green foliage of the slopes, and in front of us we could see the distant snow-white serpentine flow of the Sind among the forested mountains slopes. On the way some of us saw two small snakes. Gujars with their families and buffaloes were going up to spend the summer in the meadows. We arrived at Sorafrah village at dusk and slept in the open. Mosquitoes with their " song and sting " were ubiquitous.

Early on Thursday the 20th. we started and emerged at mile 34 on the general road to Ladákh, which was being prepared for wheeled traffic. We met the guardian of an old boy who gave us a wholesome drink of curds. Further down some of us climbed a mulberry tree to taste the wild fruit. We had our hasty lunch under the pleasant shade of a willow orchard in which a scarlet minivet was flitting about. At Kangan some of our old boys in charge of various departments came to receive us. Dr. Amar Nath Tiku of the Veterinary hospital gave us a warm welcome. We thanked them all and ambled on till about 5 p. m. We stopped at Nunnar on the bank of a canal of the Sind which we thought was free of mosquitoes. We heard several peewit calls.

Next morning some of us left after early

tea, others in a lorry after lunch while others preferred to go to Ganderbal. There they engaged a boat. In the slow, serene flow of the Sind, the boat glided circuitously past the cool refreshing islets covered with willows. They crossed the lake studying the water-birds enjoying the lotus blossoms and landed at Alam Sahib the suburb of Srinagar. (*Shri-beautiful, nagar-city*).

Wardwon Valleys.

The Wardwon, commonly know as Marau Wardwon valley, is a luxuriant pasturage situated on the east of Kashmir proper and separated by three mountain ranges. It is a long defile of about fifty miles running north to south. It is drained by the Wardwon river which rises from the snout of the Bhotkol glacier and joins the Chenáb.

We chose a short way via Pantsálthan and did not go by the Margan pass (11,500 ft.). It took us one hour and a half from Anantnág (Islamabad) to Pantsálthan in a lorry. Noon is an unusual time of the day to get coolies. Through the influence of Mr. Shrider Buth we managed to get coolies. Loads were distributed and we started at 3-30 p. m.

The ascent was through fir trees and over big fallen rotten trees. We passed one or two Gujar sheds round which there was a very bad smell. On the way we passed a single crane's bill from time to time. We arrived on the other side of the pass (9 000 ft.) in the Naobug valley at 7 p. m. The coolies were far behind. We waited and waited but no trace of them could be found. Night fell We lit a bonfire, despatched the groom Ahado and a Gujar with

a torch of inflammable wood to enquire about the coolies. They returned without news.

We managed to get some milk from a Gujar. A few loaves of bread without any fish was all we could get for our supper. We cut some pine leaves to make a downy bed for Dr. Smyth and the ladies on the roof of a hut under a big pine tree. We borrowed two blankets from the kind Gujar. Unfortunately they were teeming with the usual guests. One we gave to the ladies and the other we spread under and above four of us including Dr. Morris. Dr. Smyth awoke at 2-30 a. m. and in order to keep herself warm she kept roaming into the moonlit forest to collect pieces of wood for the fire whcih she managed to keep burning. We had a struggle with fleas inside the Gujar hut. Our knees were not very far from our mouth. Dawn came at last to our great relief. We sat round the bonfire and limb after limb gradually thawed. We sent Ahadoo to buy tea and sugar from a shopkeeper (very difficult to find) 3 miles away. There was no pot to make tea. From the same kind Gujar we got half a broken pot and one aluminium cup. So patiently one by one, *ladies first*, we had our breakfast. The tea stimulated my powers of vision and I could see a cinnamon-headed sparrow and a rosefinch.

The coolies arrived at 10-30 a. m. They had spent the night at the top of the mountain. Darkness had fallen, so they said that they could not find the path in the forest. Lasa Bhat our servant was with them. They were all farmers and were not coolies by profession. Hence they lagged behind.

Exactly the same happened to us when we crossed the Bhotakol glacier on August 4th, 1926.

We cooked our morning meal at Gauran, the village at the extreme end of the Naobug valley. It is a fertile valley. The general road to Kashṭawár starts from here. We gave medicine to some patients.

We spent the night of Wednesday, 7th. August, 1936 at Naukan (9,000 ft.), the head of Naobug valley at the foot of the pass (11,187 ft.). Here we found Parnassia nubicola. Lovely was the view of the Brahma Peaks and the valley below. We saw some choughs and jungle crows. Some Gujars with their wives assembled here for treatment. Dr. Morris examined the men and Dr. Smyth sang to them.

Next day on the 8th. we started at 7 a. m. The ascent to the Hyut Niuk (thin throat) pass (11,187 ft.) is gradual. The keen scent from the Corydalis Govaniana, which grew profusely, filled the air. The blue poppy (Meconopsis aculeata), the Queen of Kashmir flowers, grew in clusters under the rocks. It was difficult to take one's eyes from these lovely gems of Nature.

Looking down towards the valley we could see the Brahma Peaks wrapped in haze like the bodies of the astral plane. The lower parts of the mountains were covered with firs, while the upper parts were devoid of trees, but here and there were patches of Rhododendron and juniper bushes. Near the top a few hundred yards were covered with big boulders where the ponies found the going very difficult.

The top is flat with a streamlet flowing from the mountain side. Here the coolies sat down to have their lunch. We saw two snowy peaks and wondered whether they belonged to the Nun Khun massif. We saw two kinds of redstarts. A mile on we had our lunch with Dr. Morris and Mrs. Bavington, who were waiting for us

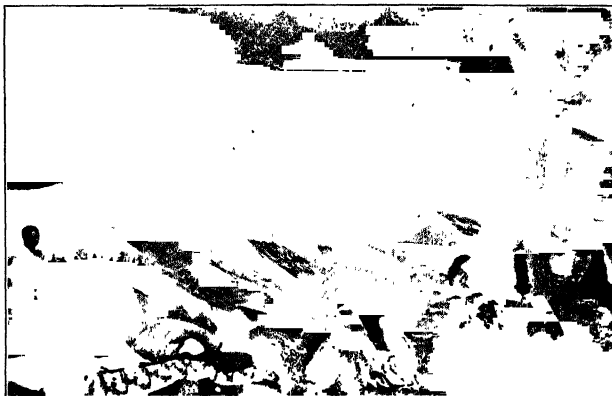


Photo by Mrs. Barrington.

INSHEN

A village in the Wardwan Valley. Dr. Smyth treating her patients



Photo by Mr. R. D. Thompson.

HUMPET VALLEY



Photo by Mr. R. D. Thompson.

KANITAL

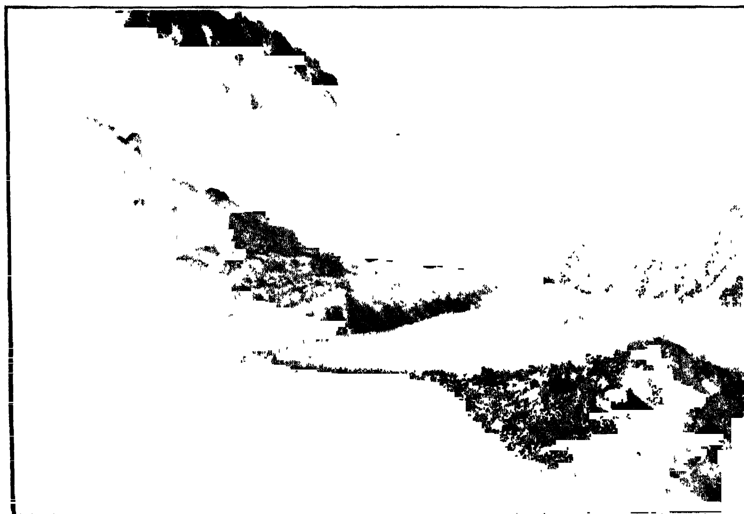


Photo by Mr. R. D. Thompson.

BHOT KOL GLACIER

under a big rock surrounded by several species of pink pedicularis. Some of us went ahead and waited till Dr. Smyth arrived on her pony. This was stolen later, but we got it back because the thief heard that one of our old boys was in charge of the Police Station here.

The path ran in the middle of the mountain and on either side of it the flowers were widely diffused. A kestrel was hovering over its prey. From one of the turnings of the pass we could see Inshen on the Bhotakol river in the Wardwon valley like a mole on a green body. We arrived here at 5 p m. and the number of different species of flowers was 93.

Inshen is a village of 20 houses including a mosque and a shop. The huts are made of hewn planks joined together by notches and wooden pegs. Houses are of two storeys. In the ground storey cattle are kept. The upper story is used for eating and sleeping. The only trees are willows (not a great number) in which tits, house sparrows, goldfinches, greenfinches, shrikes, doves and redstarts are heard. Of course the jungle crow and hoopoe were there. The produce of the fields is Tibet barley, Italian millet, ordinary millet, amaranth and buckwheat which hardly lasts for 3 months. They get maize from Kashmir. The peasants were badly off. In winter avalanches had swept away trees, and obstructed a stream which gave them water. Their fowls had died for want of grain. Now rinderpest carried off most of their cattle throughout the valley. I remember 10 years previously when we visited the extreme part of the valley the same disease was rife among the cattle. The people were in great poverty.

We met here two of our old boys, Pt: Prem Nath Dhar Superintendent of Police and Pt: Tara Chand the Deputy Inspector who had

come here to make an enquiry into a murder case. They were of great help to us and in every way they were sympathetic towards the people.

It rained on Tuesday the 11th. and the whole medical work was done in tents On Thursday the 13th. it cleared. The patients came from far off villages and high meadows. The general complaints were bad eyes, dyspepsia, rheumatism and debility. We gave magic lantern shows twice. The spectators were much impressed and grateful.

The men and women were of primitive nature. They had never so far in their life tasted medicine. A Gujráni (goatkeeper's wife) had bad eyes. Medicine was put into her eyes and a bandage put on. The next day when she returned for the second visit, the Doctor found out that she had taken off the bandage from her eyes and wrapped round her chit (recipe) lest it should get lost.

Another woman brought her girl of 6 with a stomach ache. She was given castor oil. She would not drink it but ran away. Her mother entreated Mrs. Bavington to be allowed to take the castor oil instead of her daughter.

The sun of 14th. August saw the party leaving Inshen at 8 a. m. We kept on the left bank of the river. The position of the villages among the rich verdure and the structure of the hovels is very picturesque. The Impatiens Roylei (Trul) and Achhillium millifolium (phol gassa) are very common. The root of the latter herb is chewed as a remedy for toothache. In the river there were some islets densely covered with dwarf willows. The valley opens at Ofat where we recrossed a shaking bridge. Several streams flow down from the mountain sides. The crops here were plentiful. We stopped for lunch at Basmin, which is half way between Inshen and Sukhnis. The smell of

dead animals when we passed the village was very unpleasant. About 400 cattle had died. We counted as many as 14 griffon and scavenger vultures waiting for carcasses outside the village. Several meadow buntings and larks were visible.

We crossed another shaking bridge near Mareg. Here Dr. Smyth received a deputation from the village. A crowd of 103 men, women and children, some carried on improvised stretchers, some on backs, some on horses, mothers carrying their children in their arms were waiting for a healing hand from the Doctor.

A council of war was held. It was decided that half of the party should move on to Sukhnis while the other party with the Doctor opened medicine chests to give drugs to the sick. The path rose a little higher, strewn with Polygonum, Senecio, Dipsacus inermis (*wopal hák.*) and many wild flowers. A rose finch was twittering on a Polygonum alpinum plant. The slopes of the mountains and the valley itself were an abundant pastureland, hence sheep, goats, horses, cows and buffaloes were seen grazing. There were also a large number of bakórbáns (goatherds), who treat the peasants unkindly and try to usurp their lands. Their temporary sheds were seen all along the valley on the mountain slopes. Rikinwas is a hamlet of 12 huts and 5 big Kabuli poplars. The yellow flowers of the Tanacetum and Senecio in the tall grass were charming. We crossed to the right bank over a shaking bridge. Casting a glance behind, we could see in the background a pine covered mountain slope, clothed with velvety green herbage, and in the centre of the valley was the village like a black spot on a green carpet.

What a lovely walk among the flowers it was! We pitched our tents on a promontory overlooking Sukhnis village. When we visited this

village in 1926, there were only 12 huts, but now the number had risen to 20. It is the extreme village of the Wardwon valley. One can go in 3 marches to Suru (Baltistan). Mr. R. D. Thompson's crutch marks are still in the valley, if not on the moraines of Bhotakol glacier, when he visited this part 10 years ago and crossed Chiling La (17,000 ft.) on one leg and crutches.

The 16th. was Sunday. We took our lunch with us and went for a walk high up in the rank vegetation and sat under a pine. Dr. Morris followed us a few minutes later, but he could not find us. We were very sorry that he had to go back to the camp in the hot sun for lunch. He must have had an enjoyable lunch after his exhausting walk. During this respite we catalogued 9 different varieties of Nepeta.

What a wonderful world comes in sight when a flower is examined under a microscope! Just as we get a glimpse of the immensity of God when we realise that our earth is only a speck compared with the stars of the universe. In the same way when we examined a flower, the skill, care and wisdom of the Almighty come into our ken. We cannot but bow down our head to the All Powerful in thankfulness, praise and adoration. The practical shape of a prayer can only be given when we realise that

> " *He prayeth best who loveth best,*
> *All things both great and small,*
> *For the dear God who loveth us*
> *He made and loveth all*".

The total number of patients treated was 1384 and the number of operations performed was 38. C. P. was an expert in rubbing Indian balm on the men patients.

On the 20th. we struck camp, alloted loads to coolies and left for Purmandal. We

followed the left bank of the Niur stream with its white foamy flow, which the dippers, redstarts and the sand-pipers haunt. It takes its rise from the mountains of Purmandal. The lower part of the valley is mostly covered with Polygonum, alpinum, ferns and tall thistles, which are very common at Tosamaidán. We found a dead snake about 2 ft. long and 2 inches in circumference. The flowers were scattered all through the valley like the stars in the firmament. In some places the islets in the stream were covered with Pedicularis Wallichii, yellow tansy, and in fact flowers of all colours. What joy it was to see a Marsh primula!

It took us 3 hours to reach Purmandal. The coolies arrived 2 hours behind us. There were two Gujar sheds there. We gave medicine from the Sukhnis camps to some of their inmates.

The water from a small glacier and from Sonasar pass join to form the Niur stream. The 21st. was stormy and rainy and the wind was very cold. We were detained for the day. The night of the 22nd. saw the surrounding mountains covered with fresh snow. In the morning it cleared and we started at 11. 30 a. m. The ascent to the pass was gradual. The whole place was covered with floral vegetation and there was not a foot of space where one could not find at least half a dozen flowers. It was indeed a natural flower garden and a paradise for the botanist. At a slight breeze, the loveliest would dance, becon with their heads and rejoice at seeing a passerby. Should not a visitor in response to their feelings revel in their beauty?

We found several specimens of Aconitum, Labiataes, Delphinium, Corydalis, Lynchnis and many others. The rosefinch was no less gorgeous among these.

There was a small tarn of emerald green in which water from an adjoining glacier accumulates. About 500 yards of the last portion of the pass consisted of boulders, loose shale and sand and was very steep. We found some specimens of Pleurospermum, Allardia glabra, Corydalis Govaniana, but did not see any Sassurea sacra. Nurse Sant Lal was by now almost exhausted. It was only by the help of J. L. that she managed to cross the peak (15,000 ft.). The other side of the pass was covered with new snow, but the path was not very difficult. The slope to the Sonasar lake was bad. We found the beautiful lake a little silted up. The rock on the far side was in water and miniature icebergs were floating in it when we visited the lake in 1926. Red polygonum and Trollius acaulis were everywhere. We reached Burzakot at 9 p. m. The cave of Amar Nath is 3 stages from here.

Zöjapal to Shishram Nág........ 5 miles
Shisharm Nag to Pantsatarni . .... 5 ,,
Pantsatarni to the Cave.......... 4 ,,
Pantsatarni via Bairau Bál to the Cave 2½ miles.

Next day after breakfast we removed our tents and descended the Pisu hill (11,300 ft.) and reached Tsandan Wōr. On the way we found several specimens of edelweiss. A snow pigeon and a pair of vultures were flying to and fro. We had our lunch on the Liddar. In an hour's time we arrived in Pahalgám (*11 miles*). We went to see some of our old boys and especially Miss Murch, who was camping in a secluded nook of the dell under pines not far from the stream, a haven of rest for orphans. At 5 p. m. Mr. Bavington blew the horn of his lorry and we hurried to take our seats. In 2½ hours time he deposited us safely at the C. M. S. Newman Hospital, Rainawari.

Baltistan via Pahalgam and Bhotkol Glacier.

July 26th. 1926. The party consisted of Mr. Bavington, Masters Nand Lall, Rugnath, the writer and four Hostel students.

The aim of the trip was to obtain information about various passes on the way and to make an ornithological survey of the district.

To be early enough for the motor lorry we slept in the Lady Reading Pavilion at Sheikh Bagh. The gnats in large swarms fell upon us, piercing our bodies as it were with lancets and spears. There we could not help thinking of, and feeling thankful for, the gracious gift of the Vicereine, who with Lord Reading witnessed the gymnastic displays and aquatic feats of our boys. We intended leaving at 4. a. m. but the driver did not turn up till 5-30. We put all our luggage on the lorry and at the Mission Hospital we picked up Mr. B. Left at 6. a. m. Clouds were hanging low, the rape-seed fields were ripe but the saffron from the fields of Pampor had not begin to grow.

At Avantipor there are the ruins of two old temples built by Avantiwarman (855-883 A. D). One is dedicated to Shiva and the other to Vishnu. Here the driver lost some nuts of the lorry and stopped to mend it. During this interval R. N. went to get some cabbage leaves from a field. It is said that the cabbage leaves (hák) of this district are palatable The owner was watering the crop and refused to sell. R N. said to him, " You are tired, let me water your fields while you take a little rest". What sound social service! The peasant afterwards gave him some cabbage leaves saying, "You have earned them, hence you deserve them."

Sparrows and mynas were eating seeds along the road-side. Past Avantipor the road runs

amid the green rice fields. Leaving Anant Nág (Islamabad) on the right we reached the famous Martand (Sun) spring. On the plateau there are the ruins of an old temple built by Lalitaditya about 750 A. D. Some three miles past Martand on the right of the road there is a cave and a cave temple worth seeing.

Then we saw the rice fields in terrace cultivation on the left. At Aishi Mukám the road follows the Shah Kul Canal till Ganishpor. The house crows disappeared and jungle crows took their place. I saw several European rollers and heard the whistle-like notes of the rowdy gangs of Himalayan black bulbuls. A heron was also flying in great style. A kingfisher and a stint were busy at their trade.

My heart rejoiced when I once more saw the milky surface of the Lidder and heard it prattling, " Men may come, and men may go, but I go on for ever."

We arrived at Pahalgám at 12 and pitched our tents on the river bank and refreshed ourselves. Fortunately an old student of our School came at once and saved us from the botheration of cooking. The sky began to shower pearls of rain drops from its blue dome.

July 27th. It rained during the night also. To be despondent in such a paradise-like place is foolish. But we were despondent because we could not arrange for coolies. We chose this short and difficult cut to Suru to catch up Mr. Thompson. We could not get coolies hence we could not leave Pahalgám that day. It was a nice sunny day. The cinnamon-headed sparrow and the red-breasted fly-catcher were flitting in the bushes. The jackdaws were seen feeding their young ones. The sparrow warbler was busy warbling.

In the evening our despondency changed

to cheerfulness when we saw coolies arrive at the camp.

The sun set the clouds on fire and it was a foretaste of fair weather next morning. The dark night was not less fascinating. The camp lights of the visitors were vying with the polar star and the constellations and the Milky way seemed to span the sky from one mountain peak to another. The Kolahoi peaks were bare of clouds.

An excursion makes boys resourceful. They learn to face difficulties and to stand on their own legs. The boy who knows how to rule his servants here learns how to serve others. Najum and Saltanat, the sons of Chilas Rajas, were helping Gulam and Ali in cooking. Mr. B. tasted our food and conferred the degree of M. C. (master of cooking) on R. N. I think on such occasions M. C. is far better than M. Sc.

July 28th. Left Pahalgám at 8 a. m. The loads for the coolies were rather heavy. We could not get more coolies, nor was there a guide with us to lead us through this untrodden way The path goes along the slope of the mountain. We saw the maize and buckwheat fields and in some places the wheat was being reaped. On the right hand side the mountain slopes facing towards the north are densely forested, because they are windward slopes, and receive the benefit of the winds saturated with moisture, while the slopes facing towards the south are in rain-shadow, hence very little vegetation.

The swift stream with its silvery spray rushes in haste to meet her grand-father the ocean. Not only men, wagtails and robins, but also flowers rejoice and dance when they see the foaming torrent. There is a small village midway between Pahalgám and Tsandan Wári (Thánin) pent up in

a ravine amidst the cone-bearing trees. The houses are made of hewn planks of wood.

Here is a vast field for an ornithologist to observe birds. This forest is rich in bird-life as well as the region between Pahalgám and Arau. We observed the following birds–the plumbeous redstart, the grey wagtail, the tree creeper and a small bird as large as a sparrow with grey back, white under-parts, white lines on the forehead, black tail. We also saw a dipper diving in the torrent and another bird as large as a myna with a white throat and a black body of a reddish black colour. In one minute this bird uttered ten different notes. It looked like a pigeon and was probably Turdus castanea.

We arrived at Thánin which lies at the junction of two streams and the coolies refused to go further. We distributed some of their loads amongst ourselves and they were made to continue. Mr. B carried the kilter and R. N. the vegetable sack. We ascended the Pisu Hill 11,081 ft. It has a good pony track. At its bottom end the coniferous belt and birch trees begin to appear. On the right and left we heard the musical calls of the aerial inhabitants, but I could not identify all of them.

R. N. was a lictor in the case of the coolies, otherwise they would have stayed behind. At sunset we reached the top. The sun dyed the clouds orange and its reflection on the brown naked craggy peaks was magnificent. In front of us we saw the naked weather–worn peaks like a saddle ready for the winds to ride. On our right and left was the sky kissing old craggy peaks, the home of jungle crows and vultures, looking with a frowning aspect towards the sky. The path full of the strong scent from the adjoining flower beds is more or less level. On

the right the water, looking like molten silver rushes down the perpendicular slope to meet the torrent below.

It was very dark when we reached Burzakot. The path runs from here over a snow bridge. As Mr. B. had gone ahead of us, we had to follow him. We arrived at Zöjpal when it was quite dark and the lantern light showed us the camp. We pitched our tent on the right bank of the Shishiram Nág torrent.

Fuel was scarce. Some P. W. D. coolies happened to be in their tent; they were repairing the Amar Nath road. When they saw us coming they concealed all the juniper fuel which was with them and pretended to be fast asleep in the tent. We went with our lantern into their tent and awakened them; one of them laughed and that broke the silence; and after some altercation they gave us a little wood.

It was now 11-30 p. m. which we ascertained by the position of the stars. At Thánin Mr. B's watch showed 2 P. M. but actually it was 5-30 P. M., hence the fault of our late arrival here rested with this watch! This place was very cold like Sekiwas, and chill breezes always blew. Except the birch trees of stunted growth and juniper no trees were to be seen.

July 29th. We left Zöjpal (11,578 ft.) and crossed the stream to the other side where there were two shepherd tents. We gave medicines to some of the shepherds and took two more coolies from here. We kept to the left bank of the stream and ascended 500 ft. along the right bank of another torrent from the Sona Sar lake, till we reached the meadow on the top of the hill. The meadow is covered with flowers of iridescent colours.

At the end of the meadow lies the fascinating

lake called Sona Sar (12,245 ft.) amidst the high mountains; its shape is like the beak of a wood-cock. It has transparent sky-blue water with miniature icebergs floating in it. The whole lake looks like a sapphire embossed with aquamarine. The mountain slopes are covered with glaciers. It is the glacial water which accumulates in the depression and forms the lake. It is more romantic than the Sona Sar (13,000 ft.) east of the Kolahoi valley.

Here we were in the bosom of nature, breathing nature, feeling nature, and assimilating nature, outside the artificial civilisation of the world. One is tempted to be as wild as wild nature. *Here man's mind is set free from cares and anxieties, and is steady like the unswerving flame of a candle. He is here as nature's son in nature's arms.*

We kept the lake to our left. The path goes along the bank over the perpendicular slope of the mountain. It is a goat track. The whole slope has several snow beds with grassy patches here and there. As far as possible we tried to avoid these snow beds and walked over the grassy patches. The coolies took a different path-the one to the right. We avoided it because it was very steep and sandy. Two coolies followed us, but when they were high up both of them slipped over the snow and joined the rest of the coolies below. One of them was clever enough not to let go the oil can which was in his hands. The kangri fell down, rolling into the lake.

We climbed higher and higher and the ascent became steeper and steeper. R. N. left us and joined the coolies. Had he also slipped it would have saved him much walking. In going up the steep ascent the coolies every time seemed to kiss their toes. It was all snow.

We were now on the snow line going higher and higher. I think we climbed several hundred feet higher than the pass. The snow near the boulders was loose and N. L. several times went waist deep in the snow. A puppy of four months was with Mr. B., it shivered with cold; we tried to put it into a pocket but it could not be accomodated. We then kept it in a knapsack, but it kept barking, signifying that it preferred walking. So N. L. carried it for some time and others likewise. There was no way in front of us except over the tapering cliffs covered with snow. We began now to go to the left of what we thought to be the pass. A thick fog enveloped us and we could see nothing. We sat on an island of debris amidst the sea of snow. We had no guide and practically we were lost. We bowed our heads to the All-wise Being to show us the way and to take away the fog. No sooner had we raised our heads than the fog disappeared, and below us under this debris we saw R. N. with coolies coming up, and he told us that he had three guides with him-villagers from Wardwon coming back after having bought maize from Pahalgám. We gave him three hearty cheers.

It reminds me that a friend of mine, a great swimmer who taught more than 150 boys how to swim, was down with typhoid in the Hospital; he was seriously ill. The Principal went to see him. It chanced that the doctor also at the same time visited the patient. The doctor told the Principal that the patient could hardly live that night and would expire soon, but the kind-hearted Principal said, " No, he will live. Let us pray." They both knelt down by the bed of the patient praying to God to restore his health. The Principal had no sleep for the night. Early in the morning he came to see the man in the Hospital; and

was overjoyed to see him alive. He recovered and is still living.

Such is the efficacy of prayer.

The mist was a help to us, but for it we would not have waited for R. N. and would have descended by another way, whether to live or to die I cannot say. From here the guides led us over the granular snow, field after field, in some places we cut steps with our staves, and at every step we pressed our heels hard that they might not slip. The Principal had insisted on our tying a rope round our waist on such occasions. We had the rope with us but had foolishly forgotten to use it. We reached a place called Gosan Gand in the snow, which resembles the Matterhorn. At the top of the pass (15,000 ft.) we witnessed the greatness and grandeur of the Himalayas, the mother of the mighty Indian rivers. The view was grand.

Here the wind was very cold and strong. Our hands were benumbed with cold, and we could hardly hold our staves. We began to descend the pass. It is just like Yemher (13,400 ft.) but is steeper and more sandy. On the right we saw a small tarn-a mere collection of ice water-called Kón Nág (blind spring). The water does not flow out. Over the snow-beds, over the boulders we came to a pasture land and in the dark pitched our tent at the foot of the pass. The place is called Purmandal and is at the head of the Sukhnis ravine. It is a nice camping ground. Two glacier streams meet here, one from the north and the other from the west. The flowers and the birds are the same as I observed last year at the foot of the Kolahoi glacier. There was everywhere dry and wet buffalo dung. There are some eight huts of Gujars, who come here with their buffaloes and herds for the summer months, and before autumn sets in they

repair to their villages. One of them came to us and after we told him who we were, he was surprised and said, " I have never seen school masters coming by this way. " The same was the remark passed by a Gujar last year at Zaiwan. The former sent us fuel and told us that his son was a student in one of our schools at Islamabad. The night was cold. We warmed our feet by placing them on hot stones as advised by the Principal.

July 30th. Early in the morning we massaged each other with hands and feet to remove fatigue. Just as a shrinker shrinks a blanket with soap and water to make it thick, so we pressed one another to make our muscles fit for the move.

We removed the camp from Purmandal to Sukhnis. Crossing several streams and snow bridges, the path goes over the slope on the left of the stream. There are no trees except juniper. By the right ravine the way goes to Butakot or Aishi Mukám. As we neared Sukhnis the coniferous belt appeared. Several marmots hooted at us, probably because we entered their territory without a passport. The general road by the Wardwon valley meets here. To our great pleasure we met here Tika Lal, late master, now a forest officer employed to stop kuth smuggling. He had found Mandak Sar unfordable, hence he could not go to Suru via Chaling La (17,000 ft.). He had to come back all the way from Mandak Sar to Sukhnis.

Sukhnis (8,952 ft.) is a small colony of 12 huts at the head of the Wardwon Valley. These huts are made of hewn planks joined together with wooden pegs. For six months of winter the people are imprisoned in their houses. They have to get stores, wood, fodder and all sorts of provisions. They have no candles or lanterns; they

make a torch of pieces of inflammable wood tied together and these serve them as a gas lamp would serve us.

We sent Saltanat with Tika Lal's chaprasi to get coolies for us. The coolies from Pahalgám refused to go over the glacier.

July 31st. A day of halt. Cloudy and drizzling. A walk to the terraces of the village. Three roads meet at this village, one from Pahalgám, one from Wardwon, one from Suru. The village lies at the confluence of two streams, one comes from the snow beds of the Sona Sar Pass, a stream of pure water, the other flows from the snout of the Bhotakol glacier, a stream of dirty water containing very fine sand and mineral particles. The people are very poor and simple. The produce of their fields is barley and buckwheat. The year's produce barely suffices to feed the population for winter months. We selected coolies for the following day; out of the lot only two were new who had not traversed the Ságar (Ice ocean). The birds observed in this place were the grey wagtail, the white capped redstart, the brown dipper, the red browed finch, the gold finch, the hoopoe, the swallow, the jungle crow, the red billed chough, the white throat and the rock thrush.

We also cut some geological specimens from some rocks. From here almost every stone contains mica. Here we learnt that Mr. and Mrs. Thompson had left for Suru two days ago. It is here that Mr. B. B. Osmaston, the distinguished ornithologist has constructed a bridge over the torrent. The peasants are very grateful for this.

August 1st. We left Sukhnis before sunrise. Mr. B. decided to go to Srinagar via Wardwon, and we took the direction of Suru. The path goes along the right bank of the Bhotakol river

in moderate ascents and descents. There is a bridge at Sukhnis. We did not cross this bridge, but crossed a snow bridge which had a crevass over which we jumped. The path in some places is very difficult for ponies. The music of aerial Orpheuses, the thundering roar of the boisterous river and the flower beds in rainbow colours were exhilarating. We had to ford several streams, which rushed down the mountain slopes. It was very interesting to see T. L. jumping over these torrents.

In several places drins (marmots), taking us for intruders, hooted at us. The marmot is a brown animal larger than a cat, with a mouse-like face and a bushy tail. At two places I saw and heard the call of the Himalayan whistling thrush, *The Idle Schoolboy*.

The vegetation is luxuriant on the left bank. At Wañhoi we found Costus Root (Koṭh), " Saussurea lappa ", which is largely extracted in these districts and is exported to China to burn incense in the temples. Its value is increasing day by day, hence armed smugglers come here to steal it. Its leaf is like that of a pumpkin, but the petiole of the leaf has small leaflets attached to both sides. The flower looks like four buds together. It is a big plant and its root is supposed to be very useful. Its mention in Yagupavit ceremony shows that its use was known from the earliest times. When a new well is dug a piece of the root is put into the water to clean it. One part Koṭh and two parts cane sugar is supposed to cure ulcer of the stomach. It is also powdered and in sesamum oil rubbed on a rheumatic limb.

We came to a plateau and then descended to terraces. Each terrace is a flower bed in itself. There we saw flowers of all colours. One is inclined to think it a corner of Eden. At its foot

lies Humpet. The flow of the river gets slow and here it has carved out a small valley with flat raised embankments on either side. The river expands here into several branches like Panchtarni. We arrived at noon. We basked in the sun till four o'clock when the coolies arrived. The flies disturbed us much. The birds observed were, red-billed choughs, doves, Hodgson's pipits, meadow buntings, rock thrushes and white-capped red-starts. A kestrel was seen feeding its young. Several nests in the crags were out of reach; also a flock of yellow-billed choughs was seen on the wing.

August 2nd. Left Humpet at about 10 a. m. The path goes along the left bank of the river. It is a flat valley carved out by the Bhotakol river. Near Humpet, crossing the river, a path goes via Mooskul (14,000 ft.) to Suru.

On both sides there are high mountains, and in these mountains at every depression, at every cleft, at every ravine, at every saddle, there is a small or a large glacier, from which rills, rivulets, streamlets and torrents gush out to join the main river. In some places there are torrents too wide and deep to ford, and vegetation is luxuriant on these slopes, hence we see sheep, goats, cows and buffaloes grazing. There is a certain kind of bush which the goats eat and they fall on the bushes like locusts. We saw many bakorbáns in these quarters. The peasants abhor these goatherds because the goats destroy their forests. There is a regular feud between the two.

On the way we gathered the Rheum Webbianum (Pambahák) for our evening meal. Its leaves are cooked and eaten, its stem gives delicious rhubarb and the root mixed with oil cures wounds. We saw a good number of

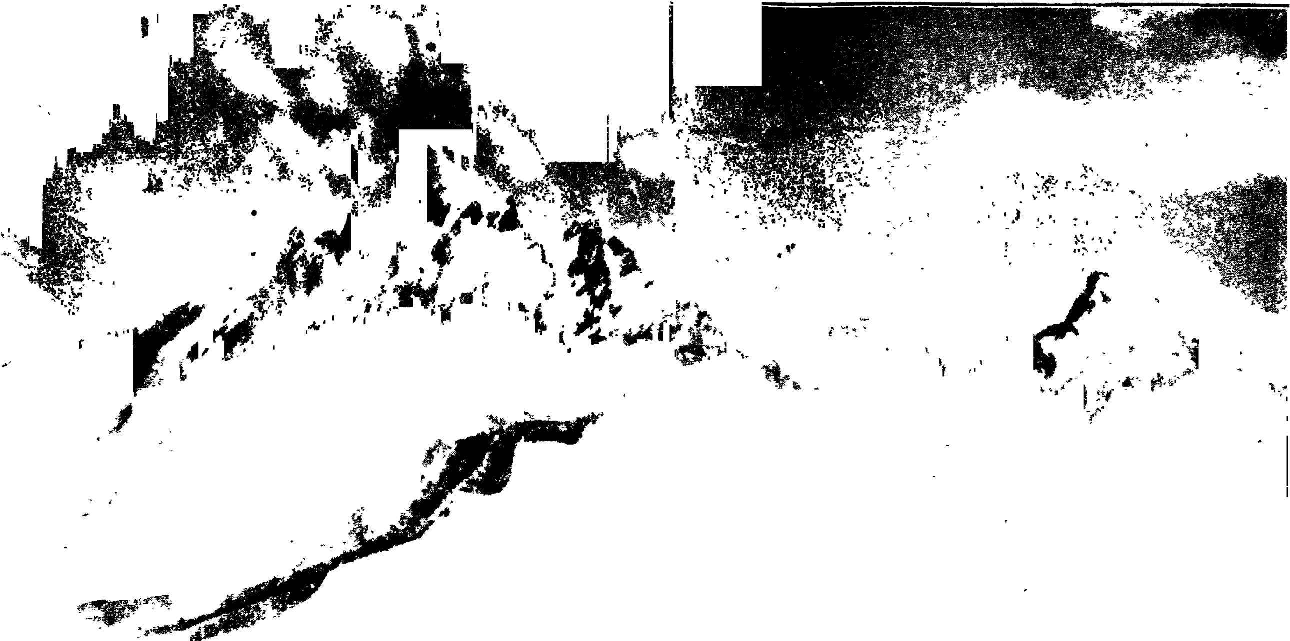
marmots peeping out of their holes.

We had our luncheon on one of the rills. R. N. fell asleep. I thought it unwise to awaken him with a jerk. We gathered a nosegay of fragrant flowers and put it under his nose; the fragrance refreshed his brain and he awoke. To let him inhale snuff would have been an unkind act. Several yáks with loads passed here from Suru.

We observed the following birds:-
A yellow-headed wagtail, a grey wagtail, an ibis bill, a sand-piper, a long-legged buzzard and a Hodgson's pipit.

We camped at the foot of the glacier; it is a fine camping ground. Fresh water flows out in several places and birch wood is abundant. The view was superb. In front of us was an emerald-like grassy slope fringed with silvery snow. To our right stood another peak, snow clad, glittering like pure crystal in the passing rays of the sun, while further east lay an isolated peak like a sharp spear piercing through the sky. From this valley several routes branch off, one on the right goes across the Mooskul (14,000 ft.) to Suru, the other on the left via Rein Marg goes to Meru hot water springs.

R. N. always called out, "*Fire, fire,*" when he saw the clouds dyed crimson at sunset. It was not only joy to the shepherd but also to us, for fair weather in these regions means a real joy. We sent our guide with Aziza to get milk from bakorbáns. They came back with the news that the master of the tent had given orders to his servant to give us milk. The servant hesitated because he was holding the head of a woman who had headache and to get relief, the vein of her head had been opened. Thereupon the master arose and bit the ear of his servant, not being thus satisfied, he threw stones



View of Nun Khun and Ganri Glacier from Perkachen La

Photo by Mr. R. D. Thompson.

region. Last year two servants of a European disappeared. A bearer of another Sahib was seen floating on the glacial water after 12 years. His body was intact; only his trousers were torn. When we were ascending we saw two Baltis descending, afterwards they disappeared. Whether they fell into the crevasses or sat behind a rock I cannot tell. Asdo showed us the place where he had fallen last year.

Some crevasses are covered with snow, especially in early summer. We saw some of these hidden crevasses covered with snow turned yellow. Some parts are covered with debris and mounds. Small rills come down the surface. We drank water from these. Some parts, where the moraines were on both sides, looked like a road made of crystal, worthy of a carriage with ivory wheels. In some parts where the crevasses are wide, they are called Hashi noshi Rávachi (*mother-in-law, daughter-in-law crevasses*).

We were now at the foot of the Ságar Nor. Here a mountain divides the glacier into two parts, one on the right-the actual glacier-goes towards the Nun Khun, while the other Ságar Nor pass (14,485 ft.) goes to the left, covered with granular snow over which we had now to ascend. According to Dr. A. Neve, who gave his life for the Kashmiris, this glacier is about 15 miles long and one mile broad and is called Barmal glacier, and comes all the way from Nun Khun. Mr. B. Workman does not agree with this. Over this glacier there is a way to Tungol, but it is impassable.

We now began to ascend the pass covered with snow, and our exhaustion was great; only R. N. climbed like the swift-footed ibex. Trudging along, resting on the stones, we ascended foot by foot, inch by inch, till we came to

the top of the pass to a valley of snow. Here we sat down to rest and to have something to eat. It was probably 12 o'clock. The view was fascinating, never to be forgotten.

On our left was a conical mountain like the bill of a grosbeak pecking the sky, on our right was an expanse of snow. In front of us were the crevasses in hundreds, rising wall above wall, guarding the invincible parts of mountains clad with silvery snow, and beyond was the ice plateau. In fact everything was white and bright. We were the only black specks on that glittering surface. *Does not every being desire to become a ray of the Divine Light which floods the Universe?*

We now began to descend on the other side into the country of the Baltis (Tibetians). The path goes along the left over the slope of the mountain, over the shifting sand, over boulders and debris of rocks, till we descended to the northern part of the Bhotakol glacier which is called Nuel Ságar (*Blue ocean*). It is a plateau of blue ice several hundred feet thick. It has no crevasses. On the right in the niches of mountains there are five small glaciers, while on the left there is a big one. These are feeders of this ice plateau over which several rushing torrents flow on parallel lines. Here we heard the thunder of several falling avalanches. The path turns now over the dry slope. Here we saw several Indian redstarts, red-billed choughs and doves.

A tributary of the Suru river takes its rise from this part of the glacier. The mountain slopes are void of vegetation. Stones and boulders take the place of flowers. The river has carved out a valley and another stream from Mooskul Pass (14,000ft.) joins here. The place

is called Donore (12,300ft.). The folds in the structure of these mountains look very strange. We arrived here at 3 p. m. after nine hour's hard going. It has a good camping ground. Fuel can be had with difficulty and the mosquitoes are a pest. There are sóme bakörbáns (goat-herds) who are ready to serve you in every way, if you are friendly to them. They gave us some milk and we made tea. The coólies arrivéd at 6 p. m. Here we met Rasool Shah the bearer of Mr. Thompson and he told us that Mr. Thompson had left for Chiling La (17,000 ft.) that morning and had taken with him all provisions ready made for the meal and sent back the luggage to Meru (hot springs). We were disappointed. It was a nice paper-chase. The hare was Mr. Thompson and we were running after him. He had left Srinagar one week before us.

It was now 6-30 p. m. We determined to go to Suru, another ten miles going through an unknown region, but we had a guide with us who had visited the place 22 times. We crossed the Mooskul stream on the shoulders of bakör-báns. The path passes along the left bank of the stream. There are moderate ascents and descents. In some places there are flowers scattered among the rocks, but no trees. Several torrents cross the road and Asado carried us across these. Several grey-headed and yellow-headed wagtails were seen flying in the bushes. It was night. We could see nothing except the black ramparts of mountains on our right and left and the thundering river below. The firmament was clear of clouds, the tail of the Great Bear was visible.

We had now to cross the river. There were now only 2 miles to Suru. The guide showed us a snow bridge which he told us to cross. There was a

crevass in it on the other side and the middle part had gone down a foot, so we hesitated to go over it. "Is there no other way to cross?" we said. "Yes, there is a wooden bridge, but that means two miles more walking", said the guide. He insisted on our going over the bridge and he was right. He crossed it first, left his load on the other side and one by one with his guidance we crossed the dangerous bridge. Here again we forgot to tie the rope round our waists. Over the slippery slope he guided us into Suru.

The coolies were far behind. It was now 10-30 p. m. Everybody was asleep. We had no food, no bedding, practically nothing. We were led to the rest-house, which is like a cattle-shed with a flat roof. It was full of fleas and bugs. We preferred to sit outside. We had the velvet-like turf for our bed and the blue dome of the sky decorated with the pearls of the stars for our quilt. We laid down to sleep. About mid-night the cold woke us and we preferred to be stung by fleas inside the rest-house rather than to be exposed to the cold wind. We collected some dry faggots and lit a fire. R. N. searched his knapsack and found two handfuls of sugar. We boiled the sugar with water and Asdo gave us two handfuls of satu (roasted flour of buckwheat) which the Balties eat. We mixed it with the water and each of us ate a cup of gruel. The good guide gave us his blanket and brought some round and smooth stones for our pillows, and then we had a little sleep.

It is a good arrangement always to be at the stage at 4 or 5 p. m. If one means to cover two stages, one must rise very early so that one may arrive at the destination, when the sun is high up in the heavens. We made

these forced marches merely to catch Mr. Thompson, but he was flying like an eagle over the glaciers and craggy peaks.

August 4th The coolies arrived in the morning. They had lodged for the night under a rock in the way. We sent a coolie with a letter to Mr. Thompson. We rested the whole day, "*To ring out weariness and fatigue and to ring in strength and endurance.*" The compound of the inn is surrounded with willows. It is the only tree which grows in this region. Some leaves were seen twisted in such a way that at the end of the leaf it becomes a berry. The natives say that it cures stomach ache, but I think it creates it. On these trees we heard the incessant call of Hodgson's rose-finch, "*Which it, which you*" and saw a Kashmir magpie (a bird as large as jackdaw, glossy black overcoverts white under parts and shoulders, long black tail). The native name of this bird is *Khashim Bráh.* There were a good number of house-sparrows.

From here one can have a view of the Nun Khun (23,400 ft.). Khun means covered, the peak being like a dome and covered with snow. Nun means naked, it is not covered with snow and is like a finger pointing towards the Creator of the Universe.

Suru lies in the inner Himálayan range where the winds saturated with moisture do not reach. The Monsoon winds discharge their moisture on the outer Himálayan range and when they reach here they are dry. Hence this region has a scanty rainfall and vegetation is also poor, but where the water is abundant vegetation is rich; buckwheat, peas, beans, barley and in some places wheat are grown. This produce can hardly maintain the population for four or five months.

Those who have horses can go to Kashmir and get maize or rice, but those who have none are badly off. Their chief food is roasted wheat flour with water called thopa, and when meat is boiled in it, it is a dainty for them. The people are poorly dressed. They have a long loose woollen frock with hundreds of patches and a girdle round their waist. They are very dirty. There are only three occasions during their life time when they take a bath. The first when they come into the world, the other when they chance to fall into the river, the third and the last when they die. One cannot be quite sure whether they do bathe on the first or last occasions. There are no shops to supply them with any necessaries of life; they have to go to Kargil, a distance of 3 stages to buy their things. If you give them a handful of sugar they stretch their hands with eagerness. They are simple and truth loving but contact with the outside world makes them crafty and cunning.

The houses are one-storeyed with walls of mud and stones and flat roofs. The shutters are made of wicker work. The houses are huddled together. From a distance the whole village looks like one big house with huge dog kennels jutting out on each side. It is said that they never cleanse nor sweep their houses, for if they do so blessedness will flee from them.

This day at 10 a. m. we received a reply from Mr. Thompson advising us to go either via Zoji La (10,500 ft.) or by Wardwon.

August 5th. We washed our clothes. In the afternoon we went to see the fort. It is a mud wall about thirty yards square with four towers on four sides. One tower has tumbled down. It is guarded by four soldiers who have forty matchlocks, thirty-

seven of which are rusted. This fort was built by Wazir Zorawar who conquered this part of the country for Maharaja Gulab Singh. Asado told us that when Balti King was captured and slain his body was dissected and it was found that he had seven hearts. His forehead was two and a half yards wide. If it be true probably several mats could have been woven out of his viscera. There is a small fresh spring. Close by is the grave of Capt. Christian whose remains rest here in the lap of the Himálayas. The fort is situated at the junction of two rivers. The Suru river which rises in the snout of the great glacier on the north western side of Nun Khun and the other which rises in the northern Bhotakol Glacier.

We passed through the green wheat and pea fields and saw several field larks and wagtails.

The sun was ten cubits above the setting horizon; and it was shining on the slope of the mountain facing the Suru river. The scanty green vegetation on the brown back-ground appeared like the eye of a peacock's feather.

When we passed by the village the inhabitants came out to see us with curious wondering eyes.

There is a primary school. the teacher was enjoying French leave in Xañskár eight stages from here, hence the school was closed. The boys did not know the name of their master. The children looked like young chimpanzees.

The women do all the work... .....they sow, reap, mow the corn, and gather wood for winter. They place a goat skin on their backs and carry loads in their wickerwork baskets on their backs. The men sit and idle away the day in gossip. They have a wooden spindle on

which they spin rough yarn from rough wool and of this yarn they make sacks. Some men go to Simla for coolie work during the winter. Most of them are Mohammadans of the Shia sect.

August 6th. We went for a walk to Perkachen. We crossed the bridge and climbed the ridge to have a clear view of the Nun Khun. Where water comes out of the mountain, the slope yields rich vegetation, otherwise it is barren. From the top one can have a clear view of the Nun Khun with its great glacier with dreadful open crevasses. I suppose this glacier once reached to Suru, but now holds the skirt of the Nun Khun and gives rise to the Suru river. The whole Suru valley appears like a green field with some 20 scattered villages. Tungul lies on the bend of the Suru hidden in one of the corners of the valley. We had with us Rahima the old man who climbed the Nun peak with Mr. Bullock Workman. Dr. A. Neve first climbed the Nun up to 18,000 ft. Sillem climbed 19,000 ft. and discovered a snow plateau near the peaks. This snow plateau, according to Mr. Bullock Workman, is three miles long, one mile and a half broad and is surrounded by seven peaks. The highest is 23,467 ft. This plateau feeds three glaciers, the Shafat glacier, the Fariaabád glacier, and the Ganri glacier which lies on the south west skirt of the Nun Khun and ends in a sharp tongue in the Suru river. The Workman expedition camped three days on this snow plateau, and Mrs. B. Workman climbed the second highest Nun peak, a pinnacle peak (23,300 ft.)- a woman's record ascent We had a grand view of the glacier from the Perkachen La. The Khun peak has not been yet attempted.

Suru is the meeting place of several routes. One on the North goes to Kargil, one

on the west goes to Kashmir, the other goes to Xañskár. The birds observed were,—A red-billed chough, wagtails, Hodgson's pipits and an ibis bill.

August 7th. Started from Suru late in the morning. In some places the road is well shaded by the willow trees. The land is rendered fertile by the industrious women-folk, who use a mixture of earth and cowdung as fertilizers of their sandy soil. In this barren region when there is water either from a glacier or from a spring, you will find an oasis. On the way you will see the women hard at work in their fields.

We had our morning meal at a spring, the water of which was very pure and sweet. The road runs along the left bank of the Suru river. It is a good pony track. The rushing and noisy river water is dirty and full of sand.

We arrived at Sanko. The river is about a mile from this place. We pitched our tent in an orchard near the inn. There is an aqueduct through the camping ground, but it was dry at that time. In this country it is a law that every family has to send by turns two men to the inn to look after the visitors. These are called Racepa. We promised bakhshis to these Racepas if they went to get water, but they hesitated. Afterwards they were made to go. The water flowed to this aqueduct, but again it ran dry. So N. L. and I went to the river to get water. If you strain the river water even a score of times it will still have sand and fine mica-dust in it, but we boiled some water and drank it.

Sanko is a large well cultivated village. Here we saw a good number of birds. The red browed finch, red capped finch, blue capped finch with orange under parts and red tail, hoopoes, Suru magpies, skylarks, Hodgson's pied wagtail,

meadow buntings, white-throats and of course house sparrows.

August 8th. We rose early in the morning for another stage. All along the road we heard the query of the rose-finch "*which it, which you*" to which we answered, "Mission School teachers". I wonder if those people, among whom it lives, ever answer its question, but I fear they do not understand English. The mountain slopes of these parts are destitute of vegetation. These parts are pleasant for a botanist, more pleasant for a naturalist, and most pleasant for a geologist. Hence you can see which element predominates here. From Sanko the geological structure of rocks changes, the mica is not to be found in the rocks.

There is a fine spring at a place 6 miles below Sanko. This place is called Khacheon. It has also a willow orchard. We had our morning meal here. This orchard is a resort of various finches. Their music was so sweet that even Orpheus would have lost himself in ecstasy.

Leaving the place we passed along the slope and came to a great treeless plateau. It is like a miniature Sahara. On our right and left were the sandy mountains, while we were walking on the sandy soil. The sun was hot. What a contrast to the white surface of the Sagar-Nôr pass !. This plateau used to be the polo ground for the Baltis. When Dr. Neve traversed this part of the country this ground was covered with shady trees, now it is treeless. Leaving this we came to a village with trees and wheat fields. "After pain there cometh a gain". Here we took shelter and rest after burning heat.

We came to Tsaluskot. It is a large

well cultivated village. The irrigation system arranged by the people is wonderful and praiseworthy. The place is the wheat granary of this region. People from Xañskár and Leh come there to buy grain. They are all Shias. There are in this locality a school and a mosque, the latter being plastered with mud and decorated with a lattice window (a rare thing in such parts). I wonder if the people ever think when offering their prayers in the mosque to make their body the temple for the Lord God to live in and thereby show love to their fellow-men.

They thought us to be officers going on an important business. Little they thought that the visitors to their village were the masters of a great school which inculcates in boys the two great maxims:—(1) Love thy God (2) Love thy neighbour as thyself.

We did not stop here, because the water was dirty. We marched 3 miles on the Trinsphone and pitched our tent in a willow orchard surrounded by water which is transparent, sweet like nectar, gushing out of a celestial fountain.

The houses are better built than those of Suru. They have stone foundations and a super-structure of unbaked heavy bricks. In some places poplars are planted and their wood is used in houses. Here we saw yaks (beasts of burden) with bushy tails, coming from Leh. They have a hole in their nose and a wicker-work ring is put in that hole, and it serves as a sort of rein.

Several mountain doves and Hodgson's pipits were seen.

August 9th. Started off early in the morning, after having a cup of tea We discovered that to walk in the hot weather, it is a good plan to rise early and have the midday

meal near some fresh spring, after taking a bath which keeps one fresh while walking in the sun. We stopped at Chutuk for our repast. There are several tiny springs here. We left Chutuk after 3 p. m. Half a mile on, two spurs of mountains on opposite sides almost meet, hardly leaving space for the river to flow through. We passed this narrow pass and entered into another sandy and rocky plain. Rocks were on our right and left. The sun was burning over head, while the hot sand was under our feet. The whole place may be compared to a burning oven or it may be a park in Hades. Everything seemed to emit fire. Traversing these places we came to a village with shady trees; there to my surprise we found a golden oriole. What made it leave the paradiselike banks of the Dal it is difficult to tell. Probably either it was an exile or a renegade from its community.

We always found a village after a wild rocky tract. We arrived at Kargil. It is the centre of the district. It lies on both the banks of the river, and is the meeting place of three routes. One goes to Xañskár, the other crossing the suspension bridge goes to Yarkand via Leh, while the third goes to Skardo, three miles below Kargil across the Dras river. Commercially it is very poor. The things sold in the Bázár are salt, raw sugar, tobacco, tea, pins, rough embroidery from Kashmir and other things. They say rock salt cures stomach ache. They eat a kind of salt which is found in these parts.

We met an old student, the post master, who received us hospitably and gave us a room to lodge in. We visited the school. The teacher was drilling boys in the multiplication tables. The boys have regular features and are unlike the Suru boys. For the night we slept on the roof

of the post office.

August 10th. We left Kargil late in the morning. Three miles from Kargil the Dras river joins the Suru river and now the road goes along the right bank of the Dras river. At Thusgám the road crosses a bridge and keeps to the left bank of the river. We had our morning meal at Chanagund in a garden where we saw some apricot trees. At various places gardens have been planted for travellers to take rest under the shade in these dreary parts. This place is six miles away from Kargil.

Left the place at 2. p. m. The sun was blazing, the rocks were like cinders, the sand was like sparks of fire, and we were walking on it. It reminded me of those brave persons who have traversed deserts like the Sahara, Kalahari, Atacama and the Australian deserts. We had to trudge round hundreds of spurs zigzags and windings, ups and downs, meanderings and circuits, ascents and descents, which tired us till we reached Kharbo 15 miles away from Kargil. The village is situated on the plateau, while the Dak Bungalow is on the roadside. For want of sweet water we did not stop here. We determined to go to Thusgam which we were told was only 3 miles away but was really 6 miles from Kharbo. Fortunately we met a man who arranged for our milk and fuel in the dark night. R N.·.burnt the hair of his arm while managing the hearth I had a slight rheumatic pain in my knee; otherwise we were all right. We did not pitch our tent. We thought it better to sleep under the shady willows. The cooing of the doves, the rustling of the leaves, the murmuring of the stream was Nature's lullaby to hush us to sleep.

August 11th. Before sunrise we left

Thusgam. The vegetation on the slopes became visible, Pencil cedars and wild roses of stunted growth began to appear. A flock of wild ibex was seen frisking over the naked cliffs. The mountains are low and the sky seems to open. Valley after valley appears with hills and hillocks detached from the main range. We saw several flocks of finches and a number of sky larks, soaring and singing, singing and soaring. Redstarts were common. On the road there is a statue either of a god or of an old king. We came to Dras. It is 9,950 ft. high. A winter temperature of —15 F. has been recorded. The climate is dry. The winds always blow after 2 p. m.

Here is also an observatory. P. Shivji Warikoo an old student in charge of the State Telegraph Office made everything easy for us.

School boys were playing foot-ball, when R. N. kicked the ball they all were wonderstruck and said, " O God, what a gigantic kick ! ". They belong to the Dard tribe and speak Dardi.

August 12th. We had our food here and left at about 10. a. m. The road keeps the left bank of the Dras river. The mountain slopes become greener and greener. Here and there are seen boys and women cutting long grass for their goats. We arrived at Pañdras. It is in the centre of the valley. Here are several water mills. The wind blew hard and several times carried off our headgear. A bridge took us to the right bank of the river which becomes narrower and narrower. We arrived at Matayan. The clouds shaded us from the hot sun. It began drizzling. From here the ruby-red slopes of mountains change into emerald green. The silvery white rills of water issuing out of the ice and snow, winding about in serpentine courses amidst the verdant slopes, look very fascinating. Here cows,

oxen, mares, horses, sheep and buffaloes are busy grazing. They do not raise their heads to look at passers-by. Everywhere the flowers in opal-like colours decorate the valley. The people speak Balti and Kashmiri. Their hovels are not more than two yards high. The roofs are flat. Only an Eskimo could understand their condition in winter when the snowfall is heavy. The temporary huts of bakrŏbáns are like the conical huts of Samoyeds. They come here for the summer months.

Minimarg is a wonderful flower-land. Here we ascended and came to Matsehoi. Here is a State telegraph office for winter months. Round about are several glaciers which are the source of the Dras river. There is also a big glacier which I think extends as far as Gumbar. Several white-backed vultures were hovering over the mountains. At sunset the surface of the glacier became a gilt sheet of silver with grooves.

August 13th. N. L. saw a pair of snow-pigeons near the Matsehoi glacier. We left Matsehoi after having our meal. The road goes over a meadow. At Gumbar there is a stream of water. It probably comes out of one end of the Matsehoi glacier. The stream does not appear to be glacial water. It is of a milky white colour and the silt is like white ashes. From here a road runs to Amar Náth. It is difficult and lies over the glaciers. Beyond this is a small waterfall which is the source of the Sind river which joins the Amarovati stream from Amar Náth at Báltal.

The Zoji La pass (10,500 ft.) was covered with flowers. On either side of the path amidst the birch trees the flowers of diverse colours spread over the mountain slope for lookers-on to praise the skilful hand of the Creator. After birch trees we entered into the coniferous belt and here we had a glorious view of the Sind valley. Even

the poet would fail to describe this romantic scenery.

We rested at the foot of the Zoji La, where sweet water was gushing out, and had some tea. Here barley and wheat fields were green. When we entered Sona Marg it was drizzling.

August 14th. Sona Marg (9,000 ft) (*golden meadow*) is one of the most charming places in Kashmir. It is said that there lies somewhere concealed a well, the water of which has the property of changing anything into gold. Would that I could find it and change everything into gold and deposit that gold in Barclay's Bank, and thus save Principal from the botheration of raising £ 250 every month by subscriptions!

August 15th. Halt at Sona Marg. A quest for the well. Several European rollers sitting on the telegraph wire, wagtails and the common sand-pipers were seen.

August 16th. Left Sona Marg at 1-30. It was still drizzling. A few miles on is Hung. The road has been cut out of the stony slope of the mountain; hence it is very bad. The horses coming from opposite directions should pass one another carefully, if they slightly push one another, one of them is bound to fall over the precipice into the roaring Sind. This stony road is about 3 miles in length. Near Ganginagir (7,700 ft.) the deciduous belt begins and maize fields and rice fields appear. The road rises high over the mountain slope; the view of the lower portion is magnificent. The sky was covered with clouds, and clouds rested on the tops of the mountains. There was a fine belt-like sheet of clouds dividing the coniferous and deciduous belts. The coniferous belt appeared dark green, the deciduous belt green, and the fields below light green, while the Sind looked like a fretted sheet of crystal.





Glacier Valley of Harmoukh



Cutting Steps Over Harmoukh Glacier



The autumnal colours must be grand here.

We reached Kulun. Here meets a road from Pahalgám via Yemher (13,400 ft.). It began to rain hard. The road passes over the yellow soil, hence the mud is sticky. Every step lifted with it at least 2 lbs. of mire, and our headgears were dripping. We halted at Gund. During the night Kishiv Ram, a local shopkeeper, told us tales hardly to be believed. He has visited several lakes and meadows and told us that somewhere near Vishna Sar there was a herb which made a noise during the night and that a certain lake contained one-eyed fishes and so on.

August 17th. Raining. Halt after double marches.

August 18th. Left Gund early in the morning. The road runs amidst the rice and maize fields. The rice fields are arranged in terrace cultivation. We observed a number of birds-rollers, brown doves, the large brown dipper, the cinnamon—headed sparrow, wagtails, the golden oriole, the grey tit, the hoopoe, the kite and the idle-school-boy. The Gujars living here amidst the maize fields are ferocious and for the public safety it is a great thing to keep them in check. They rob the wayfarers when they find a chance. Near Ganiwon we had our food. Here a bridge crosses the river. Near Kangan we saw a ruby throat. M. Shah, an old student, in charge of the police station, was overjoyed when he saw us and he helped us in every way.

August 19th. The valley opens from Vusan. It appears like a full bloomed lotus having the fort as the lotus seed-pod and the mountain peaks around like the tips of lotus petals. The wildness of nature changes into calmness and tranquillity.

Here the din of the roaring torrents, the bright snowy surface of the high passes, the frowning crevasses of the glaciers, the red rough rocks of barren mountains, the verdure of meadows, the colours of fragrant flowers and the azure blue water of lakes pass before my mind's eye.

And they manifest the skilful hand of the Creator Who loves us and Who has spread all these things for us. Should we not in response love Him and thank Him and love our fellow brethren as we love ourselves?

Gangabal Lakes.

What a peaceful abode one finds when surrounded by nature! She presents the fascinating living picture of beauty in the form of first elements, unadulterated by man's ingenious brain. Such a spot is Gangabal, where the newspaper cannot easily find its way.

After loading 23 ponies with all the necessaries for trekking, the whole caraván of the Cashmir Climbing Club passed through the Vusan village where the route branches off towards the left from the main road. Following for sometime the Brahma Sar torrent we came to an orchard of plane trees growing on the bank of the stream. Indigofera heterantha (kats) and wild mulberries were very common. A flock of starlings flew past us. We camped at Rama Rádan (Rama Arádan). It is said that here Rámá worshipped Shiva in order to restore to life his brother Bharat who lost his breath in penance.

Next morning on the 19th. July 1940 we started early to climb the Bharat Bál. The path is a pony track passing through wild walnuts

and chestnuts. There is another track going along the ravine but this is steep and not fit for pack ponies. We heard the calls of tits from pines and saw a Kashmir redstart flying out of a birch tree. Walking leisurely, the lame ducks of the party took about eight hours to make the ascent. The tents were pitched at Málish. It is a meadow above the tree region where no fuel is obtainable. Two water rills drain it. Phlomis spectabilis and red-billed choughs were common.

The moonrise was gorgeous. In the northern sky the pole star with the Great Bear and the Little Bear, in the East Aquila with Altair, the brightest star, and Scorpio with its twisted tail in the South were conspicuous constellations.

We had a morning walk round the place. Near the rill close to our kitchen tent we found Corydalis Govaniana in seed. When we touched the seed pod, it burst and hurled the seed to a distance. The flower is yellow and has a sweet perfume. Towards the Eastern margin of the place among the rocks overlooking the Wangat Nállah, we found blue poppy, Phlomis spectabilis, Geum elatum. Androsaca sarmentosa, Anemone tetrasepala, Macrotomia Benthami, Meconopsis aculeata (blue poppy) and other Alpine flowers. Near water Caltha pallustris was common.

In the afternoon we struck our tents. The path runs over meadows where hundreds of sheep can be seen grazing. Brahma Sar is a shallow lake at the foot of Hamsa Dwar (13,469 ft.). Here the path diverges. One towards the left goes over level ground, the other over Hamsa Dwar (Swan gate). A party along with the pack ponies followed the former, while most preferred to cross the mountain. It is all boulders. In between are green patches where we found Geum,

Primula nivalis, several species of Sedum, Anemone, Gentian, Swertia (Mumran), Corydalis, Draba and Androsace. On the top there is a cleft (Barnibal) through which we passed. In the shade we found Cortusa matthioli with moderately lobed round leaf, and in a niche in a rock a cluster of Paraquilegia with beautiful blue flowers. The Eastern slope was covered with Geum, Saxifraga ligulata (Zakhmi Hayát), Inula Royleana (Poshkar) of orange colour and tansy.

When pilgrims cross the top of the mountain, they cry aloud the name of the departed soul whose ashes they carry. From the top of the pass we saw the mountain peaks and the valley covered with snow. There were also two lakes, one half-frozen and the other of a light green colour. We descended over the snow on to the frozen lakes. The lakes are named Ashi Pher (tear drops). One is called Sokhuh (happiness) the other Dokhuh (grief). It is said that when Parvati (cosmic energy) in search of her consort Shiva reached here, she let fall two tear drops, one a cold one owing to the hopelessness and the hardships of the journey and the second a warm one in the hope of finding her consort and not giving in. It is said that the water of the one lake is warm and that of the other cold. We glissaded a couple of hundred yards which brought us to the shore of a beautiful and deep lake named Kaula Sar. It is said that Datatri spent a part of his life here in meditation. The Northern shore of the lake was thickly covered with Primula rosea and in the distance it seemed like a pavement of ruby. All pilgrims throw a copper coin into it. Mr. Jacob observed the law of a pilgrim and threw a white coin into the very centre of the lake, fearing lest we might take it out again. We left the

general path and climbed over a green knoll known as Danda Lot (*Bull's tail*) and found our tents pitched on the shore of Nund Kol (*Nandi Khetr*), the bull and door keeper of Shivá, the God of peace; bull being an emblem of Dharma (duty). One who does one's duty is always in peace. This lake lies at the foot of the east peak of Harmoukh (16,872 ft.). A glacier from the mountain and the water from Gangabal feeds the lake. The silvery streaks of water flowing from the glacier over the perpendicular slope into the emerald green lake were fascinating. We crossed the stream and reached camp late.

The glorious spectacle of the dawn of 21st. July at about 4-30 a. m. was the setting of the full moon, the glittering diadem of Harmoukh (*the face that dispels afflictions.*) The rim of the moon touched the snow cap of the peak and she began to hide herself gracefully and majestically till she presented to us all her phases from full to new moon. It was a sight never to be forgotten. Where there is light there is no darkness. Man's thirst for light has been from the beginning of creation. Blessed is he who attaining light guides others to the Eternal Goal.

The glacier feeding the lake is now fairly high up. The rumbling noice of an avalanche may often be heard. We saw the powdered snow over the precipitous eastern slope of the mountain. We cruised on the lake in a rubber canoe and discovered an egg shaped lakelet on the western margin of Nund Kol. According to a shepherd this lake is called Kol from the name of the man who was sent by Gangá to find a spot under Harmoukh where she could repose. He told Gangá, on returning, that there was no room for her. She herself came to see. When she found spacious room for her abode

she cursed Kol and said he would become as thin as a wick. So, sometimes the lake was called tsong (a candle). Nund is the name given to the door keeper of Har (another name of Shiva). On the western shore there are three rocks in the water, round which it was fun to paddle in a thick fog when the wind was driving the canoe towards the land.

A flock of mountain pigeons and a snow pigeon disappeared towards the mountain crags. Mrs. Eric found a nest probably of the white browed rose-finch scooped out of the bank of a rill close to her tent. It was made of roots. The clutch consisted of four eggs of a beautiful light blue with no blotches or marks. The dimensions were 1.59 × 2.37 cm.

In the afternoon a walk of about 15 minutes from the camp took us to the Gangabal lake (11,714 ft.) which is about 5 miles in circumference and a quarter of a mile in diameter. This is one of the best spots for natural beauty. The high naked mountains with jagged peaks rise 5,000 ft. above the water, entrenching crevassed glaciers on the saddles, and ravines clasp the gourd-shaped lake in their arms. Lower down near the shore the multiform hues of floral beauty and the varying colours of the water, owing to the angular height of the sun make one spell-bound. The lake tapers towards the east.

We waded over to the southern shore of the lake where we found the cooking places of pilgrims. All rites and ceremonies for the departed souls are performed on this side and not on the other. Some of us took a canoe and paddled over to the other bank, where they had a talk with a shepherd, while others strolled by the south-western shore over the beds of Geum elatum, Potentilla, Phlomis, Pedicularis brevifolia

(Kusturi) and other Alpine varieties. No juniper was found. We walked to the place where the stream from the glaciers enters the lake. There was a time when the glacier reached the shore of the lake, but now it has receded and clings high up on the mountain.

The clouds gathered and veiled the mountains arround. Some of us sat on a rock in water with a scooped niche to have their tea. Rain began to pour, followed by a hail storm. The water drops from the lake leaped to kiss the pearls which fell as hailstones from the blue dome. This was not all. Even the hailstones found their way into the tea cups and tea drops jumped into our mouth. We saw a yellow wagtail and several meadow buntings near by. We returned drenched to the camp.

There is a scarcity of fuel near the lakes. All wood has to be brought from lower down. A party went down to collect dry wood from the fir and the juniper bushes. In the centre of the northern aspect of the mountain there was a quartz surface (Zak Mak) where there were no trees. Everyone carried back a load of wood and returned back by another meadow in which we found a shepherd with his family sheltering under his sheet and turning it into a tent. The two old trunks of trees still standing reminded us of the once birch covered slopes of this valley called Pŏtri Pather. Several flocks of choughs flew over our heads.

Another party went round the shoulder between Nund Kol and Gangabal and found a large bed of Meconopsis aculeata (*blue poppy*) among the boulders. On one of these we counted sixty-two buds and seven flowers in bloom; while others going round Nund Kol brought back a specimen of Morina longifolia (Kandchar) with long,

narrow, prickly leaves having spiny teeth. It had rose pink and white flowers. The root of this plant is mixed with Jurinea macrocephala (Dhup) by the Ladakis and burnt as incense.

Most impressive was the panorama from a platform towards the Gangabal side of the green knoll behind our camp, where one could see the hoary head of Harmoukh rising a sheer precipitous height of five thousand feet above the lake. Under the awe-inspiring face of the mountain lie Nund Kol and Gangabal like two glittering blue eyes adorned with green floral eyebrows - nature's wonder - a spectacle nowhere to be surpassed.

The clouds were hanging low on the morning of the 23rd. July and others were sweeping up the valley. At about noon a party left to climb a peak opposite to the lake. When they ascended high up over the edge of the ridge consisting of rocks and loose stones the mist caught them, so much so, that they could not see beyond their noses. They stopped. It was interesting to observe how condensation took place on the bare head of a trekker who, although in his teens, appeared three score old with a hoary head.

We decended by another ravine over a steep slope covered to some extent with vegetation. In the shady nooks we found Cortusa matthioli, Primula nivalis, P. reptans and Paraquilegia. The valley was covered with stones. Avoiding these we came to the western shore of the Gangabal when it began to rain hard.

The morning of 24th. was again cloudy. We had been experiencing for the last three days the continuous filling of valleys by clouds, instalment after instalment, veiling the mountain ranges. Probably they were the products of the monsoon winds covering the Himalayan outer

ranges. The winds when they strike against mountains are forced to rise high. When they rise they expand, their temperature decreases and they fall as rain.

About ten a. m. the sky began to show signs of clearance. We had decided to return via Lolagul (*beloved mouth*) pass (13,000 ft.), Tsora Lat and Tri Sangam to Bandipur, but the shepherd for the sake of the ponies did not advise us to go that way on account of several miles of boulders.

We struck our tents, loaded our ponies, bade goodbye to Gangabal and started by the usual path. At Trön khal (*field of grass*) which is four miles from the lake there is a forest hut. Alderberry was common. There was a spring in a group of fir trees. The path runs to Poshi Matun in moderate ascents and descents. A spring crowns the top of Bhot Sher (*Bhuti Shwar*) from which the descent of 4,000 ft. begins. The rocks are of sedimentary slate.

On our right were several fields of Phlomis spectabilis and on the left there were bushes with cherry-like blossom. Solitary specimens of blue poppy, Inula Royleana were among these. A large space was covered with Codnopsis ovata. In two places the path was bad where the ponies were unloaded and the load was carried by the pony men. Lower down we walked among pines emitting a sweet scent. The view in front of us of the dense forest and of the distant green valley drained by the Kranka Nadi was charming. The rocks at the lower part of the mountain differed from those at the top. The last batch of trekkers arrived late at Nárán Nág (Sodara Tirtha) where the party halted for the night.

Here are old ruins, pavements, temples,

tanks, all made of huge stones built by Lalitaditya and dedicated to Bhutishwar Mahádiv. These were probably cut from the neighbouring mountain spur and laid with wondrous skill. Some believe that people of that age knew the art of melting and casting stones just as we do today in the case of cement. It is said that this art was known throughout the world. Ancas of Mexico, Old Romans, Egyptians and Indians knew this art. The engineering skill of lifting heavy stones was also known to them. Here is a bath cast or carved out of a block about 16 feet long, 7 feet broad and 5 feet high.

There is also a spring which is regarded as holy. A farmer told me that he, with ten of his peasants, entered the passage from which water beneath the mountain flows into the spring. They had torches with them. When they had gone about 10 yards they heard the tremendous noise of water rushing towards them from all directions. They got frightened and retreated. The restoration and excavation of such a place would be of great historical importance.

Early next morning we started after tea and had our breakfast on the bank at Kachi Nambal (swamp of grass) about four and a half miles from Nárán Nág. The Kranka Nadi which drains the Nárán Nág valley empties itself into the Sind at Prang. Prang means a throne. It is said that when Kashap Reshi drained the Sati Sar (Kashmir Valley) he sat down here on the throne to witness the ebbing water of the lake.

It is here that the path enters the road and in course of time it is hoped that wheeled traffic will be able to go as far as Sona Marg. Nárán Nág Valley is also called Wangat Nállah and is a favourite spot for trout fishing.

Near Wayil, not very far from the road,

there is a dispensary under the supervision of Miss A.. E. Wishart. It commands an attractive view.

Erin Valleys.

The expedition to Harmoukh was undertaken under the auspices of the Cashmir Climbing Club and it was the desire of the President F. Jacob Esq. to make an attempt on one of her peaks. On July 15th. 1936 the party started in a houseboat moving downwards on the Vitasta (Jhelum). Skilfully hovering on its wings over the water in order to detect its prey, the pied kingfisher was resuming its usual trade. The blue kingfisher was not less busy. The boat stopped at Shala Teng to wait for Mr. & Mrs. Eric Tyndale-Biscoe and their party.

The dawn of July 10th. found our boats gliding slowly with the current. The whiskered terns were very busy carrying water weeds in their beaks from the river towards the marsh. Several fish eagles and jacanas were flying about. When the boats entered the lake we saw that the whole surface was covered with weeds. The golden (*Khör Posh*) Limnanthemum nymphacoides in full blossom gave an added grace to the lake. In order to reach the shore quickly we all paddled hard. There was a delightful patch of knot grass (Polygonum amphibium) and frogbit-Hydrocharis Morsus-ranae-(Bhoṭa Khor) as we drew near. We landed at Nödhal. There is a spring here flowing under a spur of the mountain. There are also remains of a temple. Several images are carved out of the rocks.

It was here that a serious accident nearly took place during our Easter vacation. A leak

was found in the hull of the 12 oar'd cutter while we were shoving her off with all the crew and passengers in her. It was dusk. Had the leak occurred in the middle of the lake, the Principal and his staff would have had very little hope of reaching the camp, as the water was bitterly cold.

The ponies were all loaded and we moved on. The path was among the rice fields and willows, and mulberry trees were in large numbers. At Tsunt Mul there is a spring and we halted there to have tea. There is a nice camping ground but it is near the village. We saw people drying cocoons in the sun. One of the occupations of the people is the rearing of silk worms.

As the path ascended higher and higher it passed through maize fields and a bush called kots (Indigoffera hereanthra) with dark red-purple flowers was in full bloom. Here we heard a white throat and a bushchat warbling. On the way we were joined by an elderly American gentleman and his daughter who were also attempting the climb.

We camped at Kiudor although it was not a suitable spot for a big camp. We cleared a space for our tents. We envied the Gujars who lived here in their huts among the maize fields in the open air with the beautiful natural scenes lying at their feet; the silvery meandering course of the Erin in the midst of green herbage. On our way the bees kissed some of us on our foreheads and cheeks. A little soothing balm removed the pain and swelling. What is love for one is hatred for the other.

Next morning after breakfast we started. The path went between pines and firs. Geranium and Aconitum peeped out of the bushes. Several

plants of Skimmia laureola and Aquilegia jucunda were seen A large number of fallen firs showed us the course of several avalanches in the valley. The previous winter a large number of people had been killed by them. Wherever we went we saw the damage done by these agents of Nature. Several streams from the right bank entered the Erin. At Ishran Tár a huge pine served as a bridge for crossing the stream. It reminded me of how Mr. R. D. Thompson used to cross such mountain bridges. It was difficult to cross with only one leg and crutches. So he made himself into a tripod and crawled over to the other banks. At Gunsa Pather (*the field of vipers*) the place was covered with ferns. The wild roses were lovely. The left bank of the Erin was covered with firs. There were several clusters of Inulas on the bank of the torrent. A tiger butterfly was gaily flying about.

The meadow land begins from Minimarg. We found Lindelofia, wild iris, euphorbia, and several white Aquilegias showed their graceful heads among the juniper bushes. The birch trees were of course plentiful. The range on the right is called Sawatha Range and there were some small glaciers on its southern slope.

We saw a couple of birds which we could not identify. One was rather smaller than a sparrow, of a blackish grey tint and with a red spot on its throat. It was not a ruby throat.

We camped several hundred yards below Sarbal, in order to escape the wind. A party made their bed-room under a big rock. Such rocks which afford shelter in these latitudes are called ***Pahl pal*** (***shepherd's rock***) because herdsmen when pitching their tents generally choose such a spot for the site of their camp. In the

afternoon we went to Sarbal (*shri-beautiful, bal-place*). It is a large lake, probably very deep. The eastern and southern shores are bounded by high and glacier-covered mountains with smooth slopes caused by weathering. We were told that a path over this mountain leads into Gangabal valley. Higher up the valley was covered with masses of flowers-Anemones, Androsace, Salvias, Sedums, Edelweiss and many others. There are two other small lakes The bottom of one is slippery and beautifully paved with stones by nature. It is shallow. The other is called Shira Sar. It has two meanings. Shir in Persian means milk, hence milk lake. Shri means beautiful hence beautiful lake. Whatever the word signifies it is one of the most beautiful nooks I have ever visited. It lies directly under the eastern peak of Harmoukh (16,872 ft.) a sheer perpendicular cliff rising 4000 ft. above the lake. On the western side is a ravine covered with snow which continues and covers half of the lake. There may be a path through this ravine on to an ice plateau and thence a march over the glacier to the summit of the peak. The water which flows down from the snow is of a diluted milky blue colour. The eastern bank is covered with charming floral beds. Salvia hians, Macrotomia benthami, Inulas and many more. What peace and tranquillity one experiences when seated among flowers, looking at wild nature, meditating on the subtleties of the Supreme Hand, forgetting one's self and merging one's divine ray into the divine Sun of the universe!

The water from these lakes enters into Sarbal and from there it flows to form the Erin stream. When returning to the camp we saw a windhover poised on its wings searching for its prey. It began to drizzle and rained during the

night.

Shrouded in clouds were the mountains on the 18th of July. It was raining. The hoarse morning caw of the jungle crow was the only sign of bird life we heard. In the afternoon a party climbed a peak on the eastern side. The other climbed several hundred feet over a snow bed at the foot of the glacier towards the western side of Harmoukh. They found a pair of yellow-billed choughs. Mrs. Eric brought back from her walk a bunch of flowers in which we counted 40 different species. In the evening it cleared and the preparation for the climb was made. Ice axes, ropes and staves were carefully examined. Every member carried a pair of grass sandals (a safe shoe for ice).

July 19th. was a perfect day for climbing. The party led by Mr. & Mrs. E. D. Tyndale-Biscoe and master Bakaya with 14 members including Miss Saunderson started for the climb at 5. a. m. They left the snow bed on their right, walked over sand and shale till they reached the snow tongue over the margin of which they were near the base of the northern glacier. Here they succeeded in finding a gully through which they climbed to a still higher ledge. We watched their movements through binoculars with eager eyes, and saw them tramping along in single file like wild ducks migrating towards their breeding haunts. They fortunately found another gully, a very dangerous spot with loose stones-where they pulled themselves up by a rope and climbed to a still higher ledge. There they found several specimens of high latitude flowers, several kinds of Sedum, Saxifraga flagellaris, Pleurospermum, and Sassurea sacra. The last plant is called jog pádshah (King of ascetics) and has many medicinal qualities. They found a large number

of these plants at a height of 15,000 ft. and their guide told them that if they plucked them, they would meet with some grave misfortune. On the way down they picked several and yet the threatened disaster did not materialize.

When they ascended the second gully they found a snow field on which they cut steps and gained the top in 5½ hours. This peak (16,000 ft.) is a triangulation station (Kila) and the survey party has marked the peak with strong iron posts. They saw a part of the Gangabal lake from there. Clouds concealed the glorious grandeur of the Himalayas to the great disappointment of the victors. Mr. Jacob and the writer went to bathe in each of the three lakes, hermits going on a pilgrimage. We came back refreshed and saw the climbers descending. The first of them reached the camp at 4. p. m. How pleased and relieved we were when we heard that all was well! What a source of pleasure these mountains are! Only two failed to reach the top. The great height brought on mountain sickness. We all gave three hearty cheers for Mrs. Eric and her party. Thus one of the peaks of Harmoukh was won. Some who heard the recital believed, but others did not. There is a tradition which runs thus. Once upon a time there was a Sadhu (mendicant) who strove to climb Harmoukh to meet God face to face. He was accursed. Whatever distance he climbed during the day, in the morning he found himself at the foot of the mountain. He went on doing this for 12 years. At the expiry of this time he saw a shepherd descending from the mountain. *The Sadhu* asked him, " Where have you been.?" *Shepherd.* " I have been in search of my lost sheep." *Sadhu.* " What did you see there?" *Shepherd.* " I saw high up on the ice, a sweeper

milking a cow." *Sadhu.* "What did he tell you?" *Shepherd.* "He offered me milk to drink, but I refused because he was a sweeper. He sprinkled some on my face" *Sadhu.* "Ah! It was a god who appeared to you in the form of a sweeper." Then the Sadhu stood up, licked off all the milk drops and disappeared.

It is also believed that a snake bite will be no longer poisonous when it comes in sight of the Harmoukh peak.

The next morning the news ran through the camp that Mr. Jacob was lost. Search parties were sent in every direction. Among the boulders, the junipers and birch trees, on the banks of the rushing torrent and the shore of the placid lake the air echoed with the cry of '*Mr. Jacob*', '*Mr. Jacob*', '*Mr. Jacob.*' After a long search we saw through binoculars a speck moving forward near the snow tongue, about half way up the Harmoukh slope near the glacier. So the knight-errants rushed to the rescue and Mr. Jacob was brought back to the camp under an escort, of course not in '*golden chains*'. Thereupon our chief, the good shepherd, gave three cheers for the finding of the smiling ***lost sheep.***

In the afternoon we struck camp and descended to the lower part of Gunsa Pather. On the way we went through a field covered with several species of forget-me-nots. We found a delightful spot for camping. The deafening noise of the silvery torrent, the fragrant breeze through the pine needles, the enchanting loveliness of the several clusters of blue poppies under the rocks were some of the natural beauties of the camp. Here we found Arisaema Wallichianum and Arisaema tortuosum belonging to the Arum family. The former was of a dark green colour. The head of this plant exactly resembles a cobra.

Several plants of Sassurea lappa (koṭh) were found here among the rocks. The extract of the root of this plant is a State monopoly and is so valuable that many officials have lost their lives while trying to stop the smuggling of it.

The whistling thrush heralded the dawn of 21st. July with its melodious notes. After having our breakfast we struck camp and continued our descent. On the way we met a peasant who had cut his leg with his axe while getting branches from a mulberry tree for silk worms. Mr. Jacob had some potent balm in his knapsack which he applied and bound up the wound. Three weeks later when he and Master N. N. Fotadar re-visited the spot to make a second attempt at climbing the triangulation peak (16,000 ft.) *this time successful*, the brother of the injured man gave them a quantity of green peas as a token of gratitude for the speedy cure.

Mr. Jacob's ascent of this peak is a lesson for us all. An old man of over sixty, with slow and steady steps, believing in the motto *faint but pursuing* reached the top. An expert climber can easily climb a peak, but it is to his credit if he takes with him those who lag behind and encourages them every now and then. We spent the night outside the Erin village, by the side of the stream. There we took a last look at the massive peak which had wested us in so friendly a fashion.

On Wednesday the 22nd. of July we arrived very early at Nödhal. We paid off the ponymen; engaged four boats and started to cross the lake. It was pleasant to lounge at our ease and dream of a sea voyage from Calcutta to Rangoon. Generally the lake in the forenoon is calm. The reflection of the surrounding mountains in the lake, the water birds sailing

on their wings through the air and the subdued light of the far off horned moon were agents to drive away all thoughts of fatigue. In four hours time we landed at Sopor. There we engaged two lorries which deposited us in the man-made city of Srinagar full of regrets that our enjoyable trek had come to an end.

GURAIS VALLEYS.

This trip was undertaken under the auspices of the Alpine Flower Association, Mission School, organised by Mr. R. D. Thompson.

We engaged a tonga and left Srinagar on the 22nd. July. A road branches off from the Jhelum Valley Road to Sumbal at the 4th. mile-post from Srinagar. It is unmetalled, and owing to the previous night's rainfall, the going was bad. The pony had to drag the wheels out of the mud. Now a lorry runs along the road. The farms on both sides were covered with rape-seed and maize plants. We left the house-crows in Srinagar. They are confined to the town. We had a pause at Sumbal. Here the road crosses the bridge and passes over the banks of Mánasbal, a beautiful lake. Saffapor is a pretty village near the lake. A grand chinár grove has been planted here. In course of time it will be a rival to Naseem Bágh on the bank of the Dal. There were a number of bee-eaters perching on the telegraph wires. The peasants were weeding the rice fields. In order to lighten the tedium of their work they were singing in chorus. Beyond this village the road turns round the spurs of mountains. What a picture of Nature's grandeur the mention of a mountain brings to one's mind! When covered with snow, mountains are the

perennial source of rivers, they supply us with wood and fuel, modify the climate, and yield to man the vast treasures concealed in their depths. It was on the mountains-breathing the purity of nature-that commandments were given to the Law-giver, that the Transfiguration took place, that the Sermon which the whole world admires, was preached. Almost every high peak has been named after some god: Mahádiv, (the great god), Harmoukh (the face of the god of peace). Gwashibrori (Kolahoi) the goddess of light. When one climbs to their summits, one finds oneself above the dense atmosphere below, in the rarified air nearer the Divine glory. He feels that the Lord is the life and light of all the wondrous world we see.

There are six long spurs, which project into the Wular lake and from which it recedes further and further every year. The road winds about over these spurs. In some places it is dangerous. We alighted a score of time from the tonga. In fact every time the shafts went up we got out hastily.

The driver was a jolly fellow. He had a scar on his left cheek. When he laughed his comical appearance made us laugh too, so we made him laugh during the whole of the journey.

The Eastern shores of the lake are being silted up. A number of whiskered-terns were flying and dipping to catch fish. In the days gone by the people had a great dread of this lake. If a bridegroom crossed, he had to put down his crest of plumes, the symbol of royalty-for in one domain, as was said, two Rajas could not rule—one the bridegroom, the other the Wular Rája. They also used to offer rice and sugar candy near the spring where the water bubbles out. This dread was dispelled in 1906

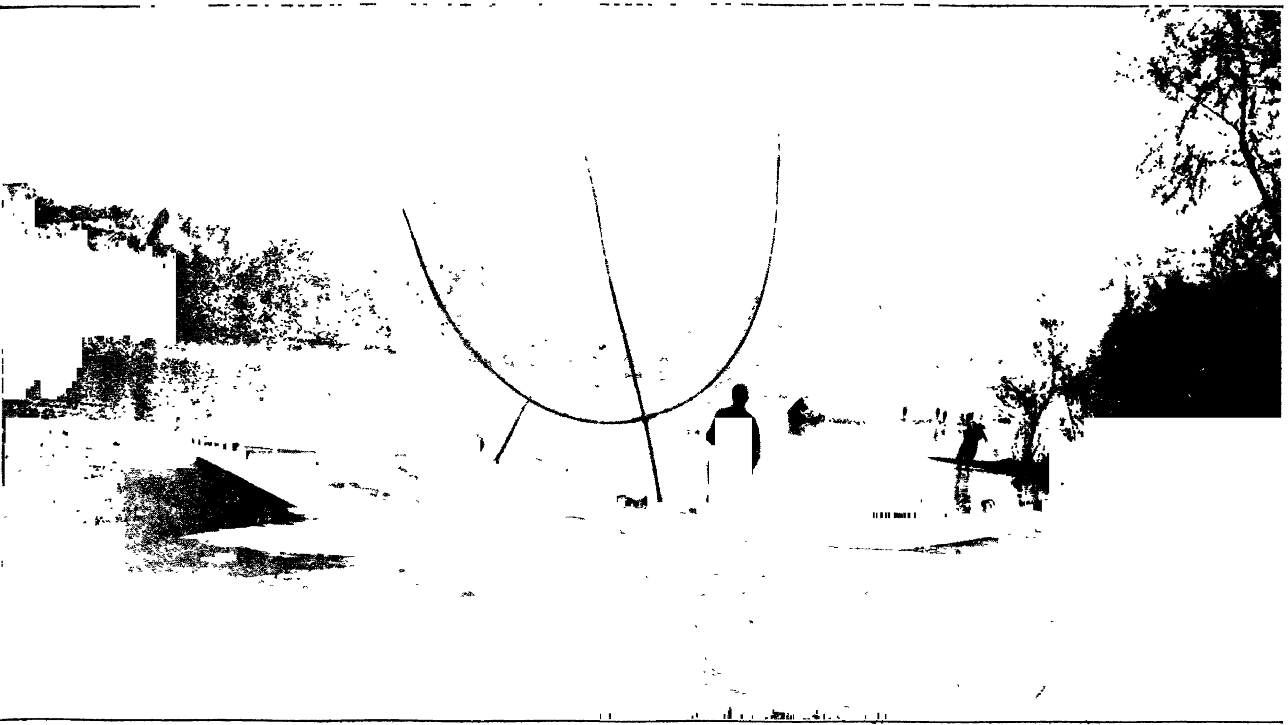


CLIMBERS TO HARMOUKH — *Standing (Bakōrbans) Guides*



S.C.K. CRUISING IN THE NUNDKOL (11,500 ft.)

At the foot of Harmoukh peak (16,872 ft.)



THE WULLAR LAKE

The fishing net

when three teachers under the leadership of the coxswain of the Cambridge University winning boat of 1886 swam the lake. The first swam 2 miles, but being demoralised by the dread of the so-called lake monsters gave in: the second an expert swimmer smoked a drug to keep his energy, swam three miles and then instead of going forward, swam backwards and then being exhausted gave up: while the third Mr. Darim Chand under the guidance of his master crossed the lake. Many a teacher and boy have swum the lake since with great ease. The bosom of the lake is the sporting ground for our Eastern vacation holiday makers. Of course at times when strong winds blow the lake is dangerous.

When we arrived at lower Saidnore, the driver told us that in olden times earthen pots were so scare here that one day, as the story goes, a woman's hand getting entangled in a pitcher, her arm was cut off to save the pitcher.

From here onwards there are wild pomegranate trees on either side of the road. Several plants of Arum Moorcraftiana were found growing under these. We arrived very late at Bandipore. The noise from the neighbouring chinars on which there is a colony of common herons was heard during the night.

On the 23rd. August we went to the Tehsil where we had a talk with the Tehsildar who seemed to be a broadminded man. He told us how he had passed over several glaciers using planks to cross crevasses. We saw several common sand-pipers flying very close to the water of the Madmati stream. The other stream is the Erin Nálah which comes out of the Harmoukh glaciers. We went to the Forest Office to enquire about Captain Steane. The office is at Chatternar in the midst of blue pines, commanding

a fine view. There we heard the noise of the Himálayan black bulbuls with red beak and claws. On August 24th. we started early for Trágabal. It is 12 miles from Bandipor. Matrigam is at the foot of the pass. The Trágabal hill is sparsely covered with blue pines. Sometimes we ascended by the foot-path and sometimes by the general road which is longer. We had our morning meal under one of the trees. We reached the top and pitched our small tent under the pines.

Trag-fissure, bal-place. It is 9500 ft. high and leads to Gurais Valley. There are several small plateaux on the summit. We saw a number of tourists from the plains.

The view was charming. In the distance was the Pantsal "whose peaks projecting from a great depth of mist looked like the mountains of another world". The Vetasta in a serpentine course empties itself into the Wular and flows on to water the thirsty plains of India. The valley itself slumbers in calm repose.

On the morning of 26th. August we left Trágabal. The whole mountain was wrapped in a mantle of fog. Not a glimpse of the distant mountains could be had and one could only see within a radius of 5 yards. Beyond Haft Kalan several birds were observed alighting on the ground. A number of turtle-doves were feeding near the road. Rugh Nath saw a pair of birds coming out of the top of a silver fir. He climbed to see the nest, but alas, no nest was there. There was a red-browed finch on the top of a dry fir. On a clear day the view from the Razdán-áñgan (11,930 ft.) is one of the finest in Kashmir.

"To the north rises the great mountain Nanga-Parbat, to the north-east Harmoukh (16,872 ft.) to the west range upon range of the

snow of Khagan, Shamshibri and Kajinág, to the south and south-east five peaks of Pir-Pantsál, from Soondri 12,700 ft. overlooking the Banahal and Mohu passes, to Apharwaṭ's ridge, 13,542 ft., above Gulmarg. One can sit and gaze for hours at such views."

At Hochi Tuj the coniferous belt ends; grassy meadows begin. We began to pluck flowers for pressing. At Pánzal the top of the pass is exposed, and naturally the wind blowing over it is very strong. It is said that once the wind hurled a dog from here into the Loláb valley. We left the Gilgit road on our right and took the Chilas road. This road passes between 11,000 and 12,000 ft. At places we saw the blue poppy in the rocks and in the juniper bushes. Walking some five miles on the road we left it on our left and descended by the Gosai galli (11,160 ft.) into the Gosai valley, the spot chosen by Captain Steane for us. We pitched our tent and began to cook our food for the morning meal. It was 1–30 p. m. There was perfect silence and even the streams which rise from the surrounding green slopes flowed quietly through the middle of this vale. 'Caw', the cry of the impudent jungle-crow, was the only noise heard. Gosai is the meeting place of four roads, Tragabal to Bagtore and Gurais to Loláb across the Myangul Galli (11,200 ft.). Captain Steane had left word for us, with Rahim Loan the Forest Guard of the Gosai, to remove the camp to Kuragbal or Kazalwan as we preferred. We welcomed the news and hurriedly having our meals and pressing our flowers, packed our things and moved towards Kazalwan. The whole slope on the left was covered with beautiful flowers. Goldfinches and meadow-buntings were disporting themselves among the floral vegetation. I was surprised to

find a jungle crow right inside this beautiful park. What right had he to hide here in his black uniform? He was no black-coated policeman to protect the small innocent members of the aerial realm, but was there to eat their eggs and young ones.

At Gurai the road meets the one from Gilgit. Once a rest house stood here, but it has been destroyed by an avalanche. Now the rest house stands at Khuragbal. The Gosai stream meets another here and two others in silvery streaks descend down the northern slope to feed the main stream. The southern aspect is covered in patches with Artemisia (*Mareen*) from which santonin is extracted. The people here often collect Artemisia from the mountain slopes. The quantity collected is sealed in bags and sent to Baramulla where it is now manufactured.

We did not stop at Kuragbal, but descended to Kazalwan which lies at the confluence of the Gosai stream and the Krishen Gangá. Here we met Pt: Dina Nath Dullu our old student who was in charge of the Artemisia. There were some other friends with him. They gave us a cordial welcome.

On the 27th. August we pitched our tent on the bank of the Gosai stream. A Himalayan brown dipper was engaged in eating insects in the stream. A plumbeous red-start was chasing gnats. The morning of the 28th. found us bathing in the Kishen Gangá. On the opposite bank there was a bird's nest in the niche of an overhanging rock. One of us threw a stone on the rock. The bird flew out. It was a Himálayan whistling thrush. The nest looked just like a cup. After some moments both the male and the female appeared. One sat in the nest, probably to incubate the eggs and the other stood on the

rock like a sentinel on guard. How charming is the whistle-like note of this bird, how hoarse is the alarm note of the same bird! Blessed are those people who always try to utter sweet expressions to mitigate the anxieties and worries of the sufferer.

In the afternoon of August 29th. we went for a walk to Bagtore, a village west of Kazalwan on the Kishen-Ganga. When we had gone a few yards towards it, we sat down to have a view of the village. In the distance was a bridge over the Kishen Ganga, which flows from the east. The right slope of the mountain was covered with Artemisia. On the south flows the Gosai stream, clear of sand particles, while in the centre of the small valley amidst the buckwheat and pea-fields rise 8 or 9 wooden houses. The beams are joined together by wooden pegs, the seams are plastered with mud. This village bears some similarity to Sukhnis in Wardwon valley. For some time we walked through sky-kissing blue pines. How bracing and fragrant is the breeze that blows here! In looking for a nest in these tall trees one's head-gear would easily blow off if one did not hold it tight. We emerged into a miniature prairie ringed round with pines. At the foot of this plateau there is the village of Bagtore. The same wooden structures meet the eye. The *Zaildar's* (Head man of several villages) mansion is a big building surrounded by small huts. There is a stone wall outside the village. Here are seen flags waving in the breeze. It is the tomb of a certain saint. Whenever any one finds his wishes granted, he hoists a flag there. Here also is a forest hut.

On the 30th. August we started for Gurais. It is about 12 miles from the camp.

The road crosses to the right bank. The whole of the left bank is sparsely covered with cypress trees. At five miles from Kazalwan another road leads through a thick forest into Budwon, but we kept to the right bank. It was here that we found Dictamnus albus (burning bush). The leaves of this bush contain an oily substance; if one shakes it, and supplies a light, the whole bush bursts into a flame. We found the nest of a white-capped redstart high up in a cliff. At 10.15 we sat down near a spring on the right bank of the river and had our repast. Further up there is a suspension bridge leading into Gurais. There were several girls crossing it. They had baskets of wicker-work on their head. One of them lost her balance and found her basket floating in the river, while the others laughed when they saw it whirling in the eddy. It is a great thing not to laugh at the misfortunes of others. We crossed the bridge and enquired about Mr. Robertson's school. It was closed for the 1st. Saturday in the month. We went round the village; the houses are made entirely of wood. They stand in rows and leave heaps of cow-dung etc, etc. close by. They are huddled together, probably as a safeguard against winter when the snow is deep. In the middle on a mound is the Tehsil building where the Naib Tehsildar lives. It commands a panorama of the valley. The people call it the fort. We visited the fort and had tea with some of our friends there. When we urged them to let us go without tea, one of them remarked, " Well, gentlemen, if you don't stay here for tea, I shall arrest you under section so and so, Indian Penal Code, as vagabonds and convey you to Srinagar for identification ". We passed through pea, buck-wheat and barley fields. The buck-wheat was in blossom. The whole

place was covered with pink and white blossoms which resembled the flowers of Merino longifolio. We met Mr. Robertson near the post office. He has a school there. He told us that in winter some 54 boys attended the school and only 18 in summer. In summer they are busy collecting Artemisia; they also earn money by coolie work. The men wear a loose woollen *pheron* and the women wear a head-gear something like a hat. The latter decorate their pheron with rings and round pieces of brass, probably imitating medals.

We cast a glance from Budwon towards the valley which has, as its back ground, a conical bare mountain called Habba Khotan, and is about six miles long and about a mile broad. There are some five villages in it, the first is Budwon and the last is Marcot. It is one of the charming valleys of Kashmir. Budwon is a nice camping ground. The place has a rest house and other evidences of modern civilization. There are gigantic poplars telling tales of the times to the stars. We saw a pair of pied woodpeckers creeping along a poplar. In this thickly wooded area we sat down on the bank of a tributary of the Kishen Ganga to dine. There is a trout nursery here. Mosquitoes were a great pest. At Achura there is a spring, and some people suppose it to be the source of the Kishen Ganga. The spring is sacred to the Hindus. The path runs through the forest on the left bank and we emerged from its pleasant shade into an open and sparsely covered space studded with wild walnuts and maple trees. Here we crossed a bridge. We came to Nile, where we saw contractors drying Artemisia and putting it into bags, each bag containing not more than 25 seers. In the afternoon of August 31st. we had the pleasure of seeing Lala Amin Chand, who had been with

Captain S. W. Steane as far as the Deosai plains. This officer has been appointed to collect seeds of wild flowers and also to press specimens. His Imperial Majesty the King Emperor has selected two flowers out of those described in the book which Mr. B. O. Coventry has written on the wild flowers of Kashmir. One is Anemone tetrasepala, which is a common flower in Gosai valley, the other is Primula reptans, which grows above 14,000 feet. Captain Steane very kindly asked Lala Amin Chand to give us practical instruction in Botany and we agreed to move our camp to Gurai.

We pitched our tent some yards above the general Gilgit road, on the right bank of the Gurai stream, under the silver pines. In the afternoon Lalji took us into the meadow and we studied the Canterbury bells, Polemonium coeruleum, Caltha palustris, Lilium ployphyllum, Lindelofia and Myosotis, concealed in the rank vegetation. The nettles did not say goodbye to us until it had stung our legs. I remembered how in the olden days teachers in *Makhtabs* used to apply nettles to the naked bodies of their boys if they could not repeat their lessons by heart. But this time Nature took the place of the Makhtab teacher and applied the nettles to our legs so that we might carefully remember whatever the instructor told us.

Early on August 2nd. we started for an excursion to study flowers. Among the prominent ones the following were the most conspicuous; Marino longifolio, Morino coultriana, Potentilla, Geraniums, Pedicularis, A. tetrasepala and Aster. At ten we came to a small spring in the valley close to the hill, which was of shale stone. Saxifraga ligulata (Zakhmi hayát) grew among the stones. The blue poppy was also growing

here and there. We sat down by the spring to have some food. At about 10 a. m. we again set out till we came to swampy soil where we found Gentian and Primula rosea with the seeds still unripe, ascended the hill and came on to the Chilás road 12,0C0 ft. To have a clear view of Nanga Parbat was our aim. As we ascended the hill the clouds enveloped us and concealed all the view except an open portion through which we could see the Wular, Chiternár and a part of Srinagar. Among the juniper bushes we could see the Polygonum polystachyum in flower. In early spring this plant (Tsoka ladur) is cooked for food by the natives. It has a sour taste. We saw a number of Pedicularis in bloom. The highest point we reached in this range was 13,000 ft. Here we waited for some time to have a clear view of the Nanga-Parbat (naked mountain). The mountain veiled itself tightly in clouds, for it was ashamed to show its naked body to men. We gathered some seeds of a tiny flower, probably a rock crop. In this range there are several passes, one is Myangul Galli and the other is Hant Galli. A path goes to Loláb via Myangul Galli. We could see a part of the Loláb valley from here. A griffon vulture flew past us.

About 4 p. m. we began to descend. After going three miles rain and a hailstorm caught us and we took a shorter but steeper path which shepherds generally use. A shepherd was feeding his flock on one of these slopes. The sheep under the pouring rain were moving in parallel rows along the green slope. The bleating of lambs for their mothers, the pattering of rain on the leaves, the pealing of the thunder and the squelching of our steps on the muddy soil made a strange combination of sounds. The sandals which we wore are generally made of

untanned leather. They became as soft as kneaded flour. At the foot of this hill near a snow bed we found the P. rosea in flower. It is remarkable that in this valley this plant is seeding in the southern corner while still in flower in the northern corner. A special kind of mushroom is used here as an article of food. All wet and tired we reached the camp. We lit a fire to prepare our food. How nice it would have been if human ingenuity had invented some sort of pill which would maintain energy and arrest hunger for at least a week, nothing else being needed by way of food. During the night a horse came several times to lick our pots and Rugh Nath had to keep a stick in his hand to drive the animal away. It was old and had been turned out on the common to graze.

It rained on the 3rd. August. Lalaji came to us several times to see whether we were comfortable. During the night the horse came again to inspect the kitchen. After examining the utensils, he poked his head into the tent. There he pulled out a bag in which there were two smaller ones containing ground pulses and cakes. How he managed to undo the knots of the small bags is a mystery. We ran after him several times with a stick, but he always found his way back to the door. So noisy was our laughter during the night that the sleep of Lalaji was disturbed, for which we apologised.

On the 4th. August Lalaji left for Srinagar. He had to go to Gulmarg and to the Amar Nath (immortal lord) cave. He left with us Rahima the guard of the koṭh plantation to help us in time of need and to look after our things. Lalaji is a perfect gentleman and a sympathetic teacher. We were very thankful to him. During the day time the horse again paid us a visit. We took some of the remaining cakes in a dish and offering

these besought him not to disturb us during the night. He bowed his head and never worried us again.

It rained on August 5th. and we passed the day in studying the Wild Flowers of Kashmir by Mr. B. O. Coventry. In the afternoon we collected some seeds of Caltha palustris and cut wood from the forest for our fire.

On August 6th. at the request of R. Mahboob Wali our old student, we left a part of our luggage with a milkman at Gorai and carried with us the tent and other light impedimenta. R. Mahboob insisted on our leaving everything at Gorai and carrying nothing but the bedding. He also told us that the Numberdár of Bagtor would help us in every way as he was his friend and we his friend's friends, so we left about 11 a. m., came to Kazalwan, had our tea with our friends and then made for Bagtor. It was dusk when we arrived. We sent word to the Numberdár that we, his friend's friends, were come. We waited and waited. After some time a man with piercing blue eyes with a purple cap on his head, a heavy blanket wrapped over his loose woollen cloak and clogs on his feet, came with easy steps towards us. It was the Numberdár. He had been supervising the building of a new mosque and hence could not come earlier. How I wished to have him trained in a School which would teach him that " to serve mankind is the true worship "! It so happened that the mail coolie of Pt: Shridher Joo Dhar the Divisional Forest Officer appeared on the scene just then and he bought everything for us. In the moonlight on the bank of a smoothly flowing rivulet, on a tripod of stones we lit a fire and cooked and ate our food. The night was clear and a number of constellations could be seen distinctly.

Cassiopeia was right in front of us. We slept in the Numberdárs drawing room. The uneven planks forced their way uncomfortably into our ribs.

Early in the morning of August 7th. we left for Toabat. The valley closes in, hardly leaving space for cultivation. We could see several patches of buckwheat and peas here and there. The path goes along the slope high above the river. Here the Krishna Ganga turns towards the north. A number of small rills rising from the slopes cross the path. The Balsum, Scabiosa speciosa, Myosotis, Lindelofia, Blue bells, Lavatera, Aster and Dipsacus inermis (Wopal hák) decorate the path on either side. The latter plant is cooked with pulses (mong) and is considered nutritious. In some places the pines are so thick that the rays of the sun can scarcely find their way through them. The quivering of the leaves of the white poplar under the sun produces the effect of a million twinkling stars. Turtle doves and whistling thrushes were not uncommon. The path crosses an uneven bridge made of logs tied together, suspended over the dashing torrent. It requires pluck to cross. Below the bridge is Toabat village, *toa-pan, bat-a stone.* The people here in the olden times used stone pans for cooking hence the origin of the name. The Gagai stream joins the main river at this spot. It is said that the water of the Gagai is the best for drinking in the Gurais district. Here is also a water mill. We found three tents pitched on the right bank of the Gagai amidst the pines, firs, wild walnuts and poplars. It was the camp of Pt: Shridher Joo Dhar, the Divisional Forest Officer. We entered the tent and found the simple, unostentatious forest officer inside studying the map of the district. He had heard of our mission and was very anxious to see us.

Hot milk and food was served and it was decided to move half the camp to Dudgai hill for an excursion. About two o'clock we and the Forest Officer left for Dudgai. We walked for some time along the right bank of the Gagai and crossed the bridge where the Dudgai meets the Gagai. Here the water is so transparent that a pin thrown into it could be seen clearly. The Dudgai hill 12,000 ft. is a watershed between the Gagai and the Dudgai.

We came to the foot of the hill but missed the right path and began to climb the one pointed out by the Forest Officer. We ascended for some time amidst the firs and caught hold of the long ferns to help us up. Along this slope there flew a pair of monal pheasants. One of our camp followers had taken the right path and now called us to it. A male Hodgson's rosefinch flew out of the grass. We came to a small flat place close to a rill, about 600 feet from the top and pitched the tent there, facing the northern aspect of the Gagai nálah, which is covered with birch and fir and is an attractive bit of forest. We were above the tree belt, in grassy land. The Forest Officer supplied all our wants and we were entirely comfortable. The luminary of the night rose to light up the dark abyss covered with trees. She rose behind the jet black naked peak of Anezber (goose crack) decked with two snow-beds. Silence reigned supreme. The only noise was either the dove-like *ghur ghur* of my companion's hookah or that of the distant flow of the Krishn Ganga.

On the morning of August 8th. after having breakfast we climbed the peak and walked along the side through a meadow. The flower beds of various colours were glorious. The Macrotomia Benthami was in flower, This plant is a

favourite drug used in making medical concoctions and is given to patients by doctors in the East. We sat down for some time on a lower peak where we picked some Rhododendrons. The view was grand. The northern aspect of the Gagai was streaked with silvery rills amidst the green herbage. In the distance we could see two snowy peaks and were told that one was Nanga Parbat. The flies were very troublesome. We descended to our tent. We had our meal and started for Taobat at 3 p. m. We took the other path over the mountain, ascended several hundred feet to the top and began to walk over it. The path was very narrow in several places and on the right was a perpendicular precipice. We collected several kinds of Saxifragas and Androsace aizoon for pressing. It was a rare event for us to see here (11,000 ft.) a pair of hoopoes flying among the trees. We descended from the grassy belt to birch trees and from birch trees to firs. We arrived late at Taobat. Here we saw the Patwari (Revenue Accountant) of the village. He told us that the peasants had come to him trembling and with supplicating hands had entreated him to do something to turn the detectives (as they thought us to be) out of their village. The morning of the 9th. August found us bathing in the Gagai Stream where we saw a number of birds like the female plumbeous redstarts. They were young plumbeous redstarts and are like their mothers, but when they grow bigger their tail assumes the red colour and their over-coverts become darker.

We had our meal and left here our kind friend the Forest Officer Pt. Shridher Joo Dhar, the simple and straight-forward gentleman who is out to help the poor, and lives an honest and upright life amidst the upright fir trees. We came

to Bagtor where we had our remaining kit. With difficulty we persuaded the coolie to carry it. We came to Kuragbal. Rugh Nath went ahead of us by the general road and we tried to strike a new path alongside the river. For some distance the path was fairly easy, then it began to show its jagged rocks and ups and downs, till we were tired and it began to get dark. Still continuing our walk we feared lest the night should hurl us into the river, and so we ascended to the general road. The wise have rightly said, " Never leave a highway for a by-way ". When we came to Gurai we saw Rugh Nath busy pitching tents.

On the morning of August 10th. we walked up the Gorai Nallah to find out Lilium Polyphyllum and if possible to mark it for seed. The seed of Salvia hians was unripe. We could not walk faster, but had to stop every now and then like the horse of a Molvi (Mohammedan Priest) to appease our appetites with wild strawberries. When a Molvi goes out on horse back he has to stop on the way to enquire after the health of his followers and sometimes to utter benedictions, thus the horse becomes accustomed to alternate halts and marches. We came back at 11 o'clock after marking some of the flowers for seed In the afternoon it rained, so we made some envelopes for seeds. We observed the following birds-Indian bushchat, Stoliczka's mountain finch, blue-headed rock-thrush.

The morning of the 11th. August found us walking towards the Gosai valley to collect the seeds of Primula rosea. It was drizzling and the white clouds were sailing in the blue vault of heaven. The shadow of the clouds in the valley deepened its greenness. We sat at the foot of the valley to do homage to our hunger.

We dug a small hole in the shingle and water flowed out. Alas! we have not the power to strike the rock with our staves and bring out water. Sin envelopes us.

The valley was a real flower garden. The slopes were bedecked with tall yellow golden rods. The yellow Potentilla beds were fringed with red Pedicularis and bright-hued butterflies came to suck nectar from the flowers; while in the distance peeped the blue poppy like the eye of Cupid from among the rocks. The stream flowed silently so as not to disturb the tranquillity of Nature; but a rude long-legged buzzard flew "*Kyuning*" from one peak to another. We were just in time to find the seeds of P. rosea ripe in capsules and collected all we could. This plant thrives well in swampy places. The seeds of almost all the flowers were unripe. After taking a good walk round the valley we came to the base camp at Gorai.

In the afternoon we climbed into a ravine to look for Belladonna atropia. (möt bránd). The next day was August 13th. We removed our camp to the base of the Gosai valley. Pt. Dina Nath had to employ coolies to plant the Koth seeds. All of us carried part of our camp equipment and three ponies were also employed. Three tents were pitched, one for the Forester, the other belonging to Lala Amin Chand was assigned to the coolies for their lodging and we pitched our tent between these two.

We all, Rahima the guard, the head coolie and the forester kept up a lively talk until 10 p. m. in the latter's tent. We left to go to sleep in our respective tents. It began to rain hard during the night. In the morning we found our rucksack missing. It included a pair of field glasses presented to the school by Dr. Casey. A. Wood.

We knew the thief but we had no proof against him.

On the morning of August 18th. we left the beautiful Gosai valley and ascended the pass, covered with clouds on all sides. Almost every day it rains in this valley. The Monkshood was in blossom. The Jurinea macrocephala grew in abundance.

We arrived at Trágabal at 11 a. m. We did not find Revd. J. S. Dugdale there; he had left the place at 10. 30 a. m. so Mr. Kay very kindly lent us some money, part of which we sent to our friend, the forest officer, part we kept for our journey. We halted for some time on the pass. The descent took us one hour and a half. We spent the night with our old boys at Chatternar and Pt Suraj Ram Muttoo gave us a musical entertainment. Early in the morning of August 19th. we left for Srinagar. The cattle were grazing standing knee-deep in shallower parts of the Wular lake and water birds were flying gaily to and fro, at times stooping after their quarry. A huge fish eagle was perched on a rock. We stopped some time at Sumbal where a military force had halted. About 5 o'clock our tonga drove through fields full of maize in cobs, sesame in pods and rice in drooping ears. Through the rustling poplar avenues, the home of our feathered friends, we entered the city. Finally we wish to thank heartily all our supporters who make these trips possible for us, and thus enable us to learn and pass on our knowledge to younger souls, to inspire their hearts and open them to the great Founts of Love.

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